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THE

MOURNER:

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OR,

THE AFFLICTED RELIEVED.

By BENJAMIN GROSVENOR, D. D.

As one that comforteth the *Mourners.* Job xxix. 25.
To him that is *afflicted,* pity should be shewn. Job vi. 14.

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RECOMMENDATIONS.

I.

DR. STONEHOUSE, in the eleventh edition of his "FRIENDLY ADVICE TO A PATIENT," has thus recommended this treatise:

AS I have frequently been an eye-witness of the great distress of the poor relations of such as have died in the Infirmary; and as nothing can be better calculated to relieve the affliction of the survivors on so distressing an occasion, I could wish that the governors of *every* Infirmary would bestow on them a little treatise of Dr. Grosvenor's, entitled, "*The Mourner; or, The Afflicted Relieved.*"—This valuable little book is written in short essays, after the manner of the *Spectator:* I have for many years kept a number of them by me to distribute, as opportunities offered, immediately after the death of some of my patients, whose families appeared to stand in need of the consolations thereby given, and who had shewn, during my attendance, a proper temper and disposition to receive such a present with thankfulness, and to profit by the perusal.

Presents of this sort, by any physician, might, if *ill timed*, rather do harm: If *made to all*, without any kind of distinction, would be frequently considered as impertinent, and of course disregarded: and therefore, neither to hazard a misconstruction of the gift, nor self-reproach for the omission of it, requires some degree of prudence and delicacy.

II.

THE late excellent HERVEY, in a letter to a friend, on occasion of the death of a near relation, expresses himself thus:—"Give me leave to present you with, and recommend to you, on this melancholy occasion, a repeated perusal of Dr. Grosvenor's "MOURNER: or, *The Afflicted Relieved;*" which is a most valuable gem; and, as it is written in numbers, like the *Spectator*, it will not weary your attention. I am sure you stand in need of the consolations and helps therein administered.—I am never without some of these little books, to give away to my acquaintance under afflictions, especially on their loss of dear relations, and valuable friends; for which purposes I think it one of the most judicious and universally useful books extant, and well deserves to be translated into the language of every nation where Christianity is professed." [See LETTERS, Vol. II. Let. CI.

III.

The following short address, from the Rev. ELIJAH WATERMAN, now of *Bridgeport*, was written on the blank leaf of a copy of the *Mourner*, which was lent some years ago to an afflicted friend.—It is preserved, with the other recommendations, by the consent of the writer.

THIS judicious and pious Book needs no recommendation—unless to bring it more promptly into public notice. The repeated perusal of it will give encreasing comfort to the afflicted mind; and here the MOURNER may be taught to say—*The will of the Lord be done.*

Yours respectfully,

E. WATERMAN.

INTRODUCTION.

To the Mourners, whose late sorrows have been especially regarded in the following papers.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

AS soon as you cast your eyes upon this little piece, some of you will immediately think of the good husband, who is no more, or of the tender parent, who has given the last blessing. Others will remember the dear wife, the desire of *your eyes;* the pretty child, in whose life your own seemed to be *bound up;* the brother will come into mind, who was as *your own soul;* and the excellent friend, who sometimes *sticketh closer than a brother.* I have had all these cases in my eye; and with a sympathy that can only arise from some experience and benevolence in conjunction, have endeavoured to assuage and improve your sorrows at the same time.

It is somewhat necessary to have been acquainted with grief, in order to address suitably to the tenderness of its nature; to obviate the subtlety of its pleas, and pretensions for excess; and to manage its operations and effects. There is danger, otherwise of increasing the anguish we would alleviate, and the wound is made to bleed afresh;*—even balm itself may be painfully applied.

There are, indeed, some wounds that will heal of themselves. Give them a little time, and the stock of sorrow is not so great but it will quickly be spent; the hasty showers will soon be over. But the real mourner is apt to have the reasons of his anguish continually before him; and to be more intent upon wasting his spirits than his sorrows: fond of solitude and silence, that he may indulge his passion, and provoke the emotion of that grief which is ready to devour him: taking a sort of pleasure to lie down under its oppression, and becoming a willing prey to its furious disorders. Upon offering to speak, they reply eagerly, "It is an easy matter to talk; you would limit my grief, and not suffer its vent; but if it were your own case, you would resign yourselves up to it, or faint under the pressure of such a calamity." The first onsets of sorrow do indeed call for compassion more than advice: we are to *mourn with them that mourn.* The silence of Job's friends, *because they saw his grief was very great,* was more to the pur-

* *Curando fieri quædam majora videmus*
Vulnera, quæ melius non tetigisse fuit.

pose than any thing they could say. It would be inhuman to deny the relief of mourning, when mourning itself is often its own relief. But is there any harm in prescribing bounds to it? By what rule of common sense should grief be left unlimited, more than any other passion? Why such costly sacrifices as health and life, and the comforts of both, to a calamity that you think has carried off too much already? We may pay the tribute of a few tears to the memory of some dear objects; but then, Religion says, we should *weep as if we wept not*, because there will ever be more occasion of joy to a good man, than of sorrow: And Philosophy says, it is a needless aggravation of misery to faint under our pains; and not have courage to suffer those misfortunes which it is not in our power to avoid.

Should the pilot abandon the helm in a violent tempest? Should reason and grace be least hearkened to, when their dictates are most reasonable, and their maxims most needful? Has not this weakness of mind betrayed abundance of people into those extremities that are a disgrace to human nature, and a reproach to the Christian character.

Ye children of affliction! break the tide of sorrow, by throwing it into different channels; and direct its course so as to make it useful to spiritual purposes. It will be more easy, at such a time, to convert the sorrow of this world, that worketh death, into that godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto life. So other natural passions may be sanctified, by making them assist in the exercise of spiritual grace. It is a tender time, while the soul is more susceptible of impression, and turns more easily, as the softened wax to the seal. As thankfulness is a proper graft upon the joys of prosperity, when the heart is enlarged, so will godly sorrow be seasonable to a mournful occasion; and the rather, because this is one great end of God in all our afflictions.

I know not whether it has been observed or no; but to me it seems, that the measures of mourning are represented to lessen in proportion as men are nearer to God. The people of God, under the Old Testament, were forbid those signs of sorrow that were common among the Gentiles, as cutting themselves, and tearing their hair. It was their glory to have God so nigh to them. The priests among them, were not allowed those expressions of sorrow which were indulged to the people. The priests were nearer to God, and ministering before him. The Nazarite, who by a special separation, was most nearly devoted to God, had the least to do with mourning, or its forms, *because the consecration of his God was upon his head*, Numb. vi. 7.—The Christian church, who are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, a peculiar holy people, and a royal priesthood, are laid under this prohibition, that *they sorrow not as do others*, 1 Thess. iv. 13.—Neither as other Jews, nor other Gentiles. Among Christians, the apostles being nearest to God in holiness and spirituality, were the best able to *rejoice in tribulation. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.* And to mount the last highest step of this gradation, heaven, where we are nearest of all to God, *there shall be no more sorrow*, Rev. xxi. 4. *everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; thanksgiving, and the voice of praise. In thy presence is fulness of joy;—at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.*

The most comfortable thoughts, in this case, and such as make up the very cordial of consolation, belong only to a truly good man, and can only be relished by such a one. Why do you oppose a man of this

world with arguments drawn from another? You talk of heaven, and he minds nothing but earth: You propose the calm healing thought of the Divine approbation, with the pleasure and honour of God's favour, to a man who says unto God. *Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:* You preach the consolations of God, which are not small, to one who knows no consolation but in corn, and wine, and oil. What comfort to a man from the thoughts of the shortness of human life, whose greatest trouble is that it is so short, or else is apprehensive that the end of these troubles will begin those which shall never end? He has no more title to this true comfort, than he has a fitness for it; the good man only being qualified for, and capable of this. Christian consolations belong only to Christians: they are of no use to others, who have neither part nor lot in this matter, no more than in that heaven, from whence they are derived They suppose a disposition capable of them, as the rudiments of any science are previous to the operations of that science; but the promiscuous application of these comforts, to all sorts of characters, is mere quackery in divinity, instead of approved remedies, and fair practice. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; because he hath shewn unto them his covenant.* Others must go to Cicero, Seneca, or Plutarch de Consolatione; and try what their flourishes and general reasoning will do. The aids of ancient philosophy, how dry, how insufficient they are, will appear from a few passages, which I take leave to borrow from archbishop Tillotson, one of the best writers upon the best of subjects—*The excellency of the Christian Religion.*

"Some pretend to doubt whether there was ever any such thing as sense of pain; and yet when any great evil was upon them, they would certainly sigh and groan as pitifully, and cry out as loud as other men.

"Others have sought to ease themselves, by maintaining, that afflictions are no real evils, and therefore wise men ought not to be troubled at them: but he must be a very wise man indeed that can forbear being troubled at things which are very troublesome; and yet thus Possidonius distinguished, as Cicero tells us—He could not deny pain to be very troublesome, but he was resolved never to acknowledge it to be an evil. But sure it is a very slender comfort that relies on this nice distinction between things being troublesome, and being evils; when all the evil of affliction lies in the trouble it creates to us. And when the best that can be is made of this argument, it is good for nothing but to be thrown away as a stupid paradox, and against the common sense of mankind.

"Others have endeavoured to elude their trouble by a graver way of reasoning; that these things are fatal and necessary; and that we ought not to be troubled at what we cannot help. But this only proves the troubles to be as fatal as the calamity that occasions it. And, perhaps, that a thing cannot be helped, is one of the justest causes of trouble to a wise man; as Augustus smartly replied, to one that administered this comfort to him, on the fatality of things: this was so far from giving any ease to his mind, that, says he, This is the very thing that troubles me.*

"Others have tried to divert and entertain the troubles of other men, by pretty and plausible sayings, such as this, That if evils are long, they

* *Hoc ipsum est quod me male habet.*

are but light; if sharp, but short: and a hundred such like. Now I am apt to imagine, that it is but a very small comfort that a plain ordinary man, lying under a sharp fit of the stone, for a week together, receives from this fine sentence; for what pleasure soever men, who are at ease and leisure, may take in being the authors of witty sayings, I doubt it is but poor consolation, that a man under great and stinging afflictions can find from them.

"The best moral argument to patience, in my opinion, is the advantage of patience itself. To bear evils as quietly as we can, is the way to make them lighter and easier: but to toss and fling, and be restless, is good for nothing but to fret and enrage our pain, to gall our sores, and make the burden upon us sit more uneasy. And this is properly no consideration of comfort, but an art of managing ourselves, under our afflictions, so as not to make them more grievous than indeed they are.

"But now the arguments that Christianity propound to us, are such as prove a just and reasonable encouragement for men to bear affliction patiently." And then the author mentions "the example of Christ and the first Christians; the glory that shall follow the light afflictions of this present time:" And closes this part of his subject with a passage in the "life of Lipsius, who was a great studier and admirer of the Stoic philosophy. When he lay on his death bed, and one of his friends who came to visit him, said, That he need not use arguments to persuade him to patience under his pains—the philosophy, which he had studied so much, would furnish him with motives enough to that purpose; he answers him with this ejaculation: *Domine Jesu, da mihi patientiam Christianam;* that is, *Lord Jesus, give me Christian patience.* No patience like that, which the considerations of Christianity are apt to work in us."

This is one instance of the excellence of the Christian religion, its furnishing us with the best motives and considerations to patience, under the evils and afflictions of this life.

All the other philosophical thoughts, so far as they are of any use, the Christian can take and make his best of; and when they fail, he knows where to go. He can turn to God, and say, Psalm cxix. 82. *When wilt thou comfort me?* If thou dost not, all the world cannot. Without thee, miserable comforters are they all. If thou dost not speak peace, there will be no end of my trouble. This balm is only to be found in Gilead. *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation:* say, *Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*—And then will I say, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul:* Thy comforts! Comforts that come from God, which lead to him, and are fully to be enjoyed in him. The light of thy countenance, the sense of the pardon of my sins, an interest in the promises of the covenant of grace, a conquest of self-will, and consequently of every other enemy, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, the hope and prospect of eternal life near, and not the less pleasant on that account;* these are consolations indeed that are *not small.* There are two things also said of those divine comforts, that give them infinite advantage above all

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* *O vitam vere vitalem, ut ait Ennius, omnibus bonis et gaudiis circumfluentem! Sed beatam etiam mortem, quæ ad beatissimam vitam aditum aperiat.* Cic. Cons.

other; they are *strong*, and they are *full*.—They are *strong consolations*, Heb. vi. 18. Others are too weak to bear much weight. A soul, in all its heaviness, finds they are not affliction proof: they cannot stand under the troubles of life, much less will they do against the terrors of death and judgment. But the comforts that are truly Christian, will bear a man up when every thing else fails about him, the world sinking under him, and all is a-going. The other thing said of these divine consolations is, that they are *full*: as Christ saith to his disciples, *Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full.*

To have a God to apply to, who is the *Father of mercies, and the God of all consolations*; the God that *comforteth them who are cast down*: to have an interest in Christ, by whom we *have access unto the Father*; whose grace is *sufficient for us in every time of need*; to have the *Spirit, the Comforter* by office, to do his office to us, and diffuse that joy and peace in believing, which are part of the kingdom of God, and the fruits of the Spirit: to have the holy Scriptures to go to, that were written on purpose that we *through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*. These are, in comparison to all other comforts, as the *fountain of living waters* to the *broken cisterns* that can hold no water.

Prayer gives ease to the mind, revives faith, hope, and patience; promotes holiness, as well as fetches down comfort. It is, in short, the true way of handling our weapons against our spiritual adversaries: *Put on the whole armour of God; praying with all prayer*. This is the true way of applying our spiritual remedy: *Is any afflicted, let him pray.*

Besides the mourner for departed friends, the afflicted on other accounts will here find some relief under their troubles of life. The nature of submission, and the arguments and motives of acquiescence, do very much agree to both. They have such an affinity, that one can hardly be treated of without touching upon the other: as, in laying down the map of any kingdom, some borders of neighbouring nations will appear. They are but different ingredients of the same bitter cup, put into the hands of mortal men.

He usually behaves best, who is best prepared, who has not his weapons to seek when they are to be used; nor his armour to be put on, when the attack is begun.* It is observed, that none are more confounded when calamity comes, than those who are most careless to prevent it. Principles must be fixed, before they can be used; and frequently practice must settle habits, before we can enjoy the benefit of that ease with which they exert themselves. Of all people they suffer most, who will not allow you to mention beforehand the death of a beloved object, nor themselves to think of any such thing.—"Do not speak of it; I cannot bear the thoughts of it: to be sure I shall run distracted." And so, partly for quietness sake, and partly from complaisance, not a word is said of the matter: the dear thing is clapt to the heart; it clings, and grows to the affections; and when snatched away, no wonder if the parents grieve and lament. They seem to have

* *Nec vero quisquam doloris impetum excipere, ac fortiter perpeti posset, nisi se prius ad obsistendum comparasset:—ex quo consuetudo fit, quæ callum obducit animo, nosque contra omnes vel naturæ vel fortunæ impetus armat.* Cic. Cons.

had no notion of their dear creature's being mortal; it oversets them at once, because they have no consideration about them to hinder its doing so; nothing that can weaken the influence of their vexation. Whereas he is a wise man indeed, who prepares both for his own death, and the death of his friends; who so improves his foresight of troubles, as to abate the uneasiness of them; and puts in practice that philosophic resolution I have read of, with which I conclude this address: "I am thinking with myself every day, how many things are dear to me; and after I have considered them as temporary and perishing, I prepare myself, from that minute, to bear the loss of them without weakness."

THE

MOURNER.

SECTION I.

Allowances made to the Mourner, and which will be made both by God and Man.

SOME allowances will surely be made for our natural aversion to troubles, by him who knows our frame. 'No affliction for the present being joyous but 'grievous;' it is well if afterwards it 'produces the pea-'ceable fruits of righteousness.' The man must feel; the Christian will submit. The grace that exalts us to the dignity of being the children of God, does not lift us entirely above the affections and passions which are common to men; but what is better, it governs them by its laws, and uses them to its own purposes; and doth not eradicate but perfect our nature.

There is a great difference in the constitutions of men. That which melts down one person, shall hardly warm another. When there is a predominance of the softer passions, every bowel shall move within them; and, like the sensative plant, they shrink in, and are affected with the smallest touch.

Suppose, upon the first invasion of an evil; the sudden news of such a loss, may be too hard for a man that has a good command of himself. He must recover himself; he must rally the forces of reason and religion: when the shock is over, he will better perceive it might have been more decently borne.

It is no crime to be sensible of the greatness of our loss, nor to feel the pain of it. Insensibility is no virtue, has no glory in it, will have no reward. The great Abraham 'came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep,' Gen. xxiii. 2. without any diminution to his great character. Jesus himself wept over Lazarus; which he would not have done, had there been any thing unseemly in dropping a tear over a departed friend. 'Devout men 'carried Stephen to his funeral, and made great lamen-'tation;' and yet they were devout men.—"Human nature is framed with such senses and passions as, according to God's intentions, will be affected suitably to their objects; and if the soul acts rationally, it is moved accordingly. And if we consider the end for which afflictions are sent, namely, for our amendment, it will appear necessary that they should be felt; for if we have no sense of the blow, how shall we submit to the hand that gives it? If our affections are seared against all painful impressions, God is then defeated in the best means of our awakening; for he that is not sensible of his affliction, will continue secure in his sin."*

There are two extremes ever to be avoided under troubles: the one is slighting the affliction, as if we scorned to feel it, like a mere accident, not to be regarded: the other is sinking under it, as if we had no help to go to, but would fling up all in sullen despair; instead of endeavouring to attain the end God himself aims at in the dispensation. Both these extremes are cautioned against: 'My son, despise not thou the chas-'tening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked,' Heb. xii. 5. If you despise the chastening, you may provoke him to say, "I will make you feel before I have done with you;" and so draw upon you more strokes, as they did, 'Thou hast stricken them, but they 'have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they 'have refused to receive correction: they have made 'their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to 'return,' Jer. v. 3. And what followed this effected insensibility, in which they hardened themselves against

* Dr. Bates.

God and his providence? They made matters ten times worse, and suffered many evils instead of one. 'Where-'fore the lion out of the forest shall slay them,' some fierce and cruel enemy: 'The wolf of the evening shall 'spoil them,' some greedy and devouring enemy: 'The 'leopard shall watch over their cities; every one that 'goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces,' some watchful cunning adversary: 'Because their transgressions 'are many, and their backslidings are increased,' Jer. v. 6.

How much better is it for me to say with the church, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have 'sinned against him?' I will bear it as well as I can, and will endeavour to bear it as well as I ought. 'My 'wound is grievous; but I said, Truly this is a grief, 'and I must bear it,' Jer. x. 19.

The particular circumstances of trouble in my case, are all under his compassionate eye. The degrees of bitterness in my cup, with every ingredient, were of his own mixing: it is the 'cup which my Father gives me 'to drink.' He will allow the degree of sorrow to be in proportion to the degrees of affliction. That degree of sorrow may be a sin in one affliction, which is but decent in another. The blossom soon withers, and the flower fades; the fair blossom, the beautiful flower:—but 'all flesh is grass.' One channel of my pleasure is dried up; it is but one channel; or if more, the fountain is still open, and can never run dry. I may mourn ths loss of what was so necessary to me, with a degree of sorrow beyond what is due only to a convenience of life. The loss of one upon whom our all depends, not only the comfort and delights, but the very support and livelihood of a family; how deep must that wound be? and who can forbid it to bleed, where extremities to be suffered, come in the room of endearment and delight enjoyed? Job lost his children, his estate, his health, his peace; 'heavy as the sand of the 'sea was his grief!' but here comes a mourner, and says, I have lost all this in one person: 'I was at ease, but 'thou hast broken me to pieces.' A widow and fatherless children; a poor widow and fatherless: sick, as

well as poor; deserted by friends, persecuted by enemies; how many degrees of anguish are here beyond the sorrow only of being a widow? How allowable for such a one to say, (and such a one there has been) 'Even 'to day is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier 'than my groaning,' Job xxiii. 2.

Grief must have a vent; sorrow may express itself. I may sigh and weep, and tell my mournful story to God and man: 'In all this Job sinned not. As for me, is 'my complaint to men? And if it were so, why should 'not my spirit be troubled?' Job xxi. 4. It is in vain to complain to men. I will turn my complaint to God: he will allow me to complain to him, though I must not complain of him. 'I cried unto thee with my voice, 'and made supplication. I poured out my complaint 'before him; I shewed before him my trouble,' Psalm cxlii. 1, 2. There is a Psalm on purpose for the afflicted, with this title, 'A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord,'—Psalm 102d. When a man is so afflicted as to be overwhelmed with it, he may complain; he may complain even 'before the Lord:' nay, he may pour out his complaint. Another while he says, 'I am 'so troubled I cannot speak.' Anguish in extremity will sometimes strike dumb, and at another time pour out complaints. My sorrows are great, because my loss is so. Thou knowest, O Lord, more than myself, how bitter in many respects this is likely to prove. What a gap is made in the comfort of my life? What troubles are like to come in at this breach, like a flood. Whither should I carry my sorrows and cares, but to thee, who carest for me? My friends are quickly weary of my complaints: it is burdensome to them, though it relieves me. Thou art the Father of compassion: All weeping eyes lift up themselves to thee, and every sighing prayer from the ends of the earth. 'Hear my prayer, 'O Lord; and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy 'face; incline thine ear. My heart is smitten and with-'ered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread; or I 'mingle it with ashes, the bread of affliction, and the 'water of affliction.' My courage fails; my spirits are

wasted by the greatness of my sorrow: 'By reason of 'the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin; 'I am like a pelican in the wilderness,' a lonely, solitary creature. 'I watch, and am like a sparrow upon the 'house-top:' I decline society by day, and am deprived of sleep by night. 'I have eat ashes like bread, and 'mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine in-'dignation, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and 'cast me down.' Psalm cii. 1. 10. Heal the wound which thou hast made. Surely there is balm in Gilead, and a Physician there. Assuage my grief by thy consolations, which are not small. Relieve my loneliness, by a great deal of thy sensible presence. Give me so much more of thy company, that I may find I am 'not 'alone, because the Father is with me.' My light is gone out in darkness; let the Sun of Righteousness arise upon me, with healing under his wings. Retrieve the damage and loss as far as may be, by the methods of thy providence. 'I am oppressed: undertake for me.'

I may open my sorrows to men too, if I can get any who will bestow the charity of hearing my story. It will ease the mind; it will draw forth something of relief from our thoughts; it will direct and engage their prayers; it will extort some pity: and it is something to be pitied in affliction. Job missed of this, when he had reason to expect it. 'He hath put my brethren far from 'me; and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from 'me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends 'have forgotten me; they that dwell in mine house. I 'called my servant, and he gave me no answer: I in-'treated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to 'my wife:' she turned away from me. And all refuse the kind office to a poor afflicted man when he most needs it. 'All my inward friends abhorred me; and 'they whom I loved are turned against me. Have pity 'upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends; for the 'hand of God hath touched me. To the afflicted pity 'should be shewn.'

The most earnest prayer to God for the removal of an affliction, or support under it, is very consistent with entire submission to the will of God; and is allowed to

the mourner. Nothing could be more submissive in a mere man, than that of David; 'I was dumb, and opened 'not my mouth, because thou didst it.' Dumb to all murmuring language, but not to prayer: for the very next words are, 'Remove thy stroke far away from me: 'I am consumed by the blow of thine hand,' Psalm xxxix. 9, 10. But a greater than David is here. The Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect pattern of patience; and yet none ever prayed more earnestly than he that the 'cup might pass from him;' and, 'being in an ago-'ny, he prayed more earnestly.' Luke xxii. 42. 'With 'strong cries and tears,' when in the days of his flesh, he spake the language of flesh and blood. He prayed earnestly; with strong cries and groans. Importunately; for he prayed three times, as St. Paul besought the Lord thrice; and with great humility, prostrate upon the ground. And yet his earnestness, importunity, and humility, was all consistent with that submission: 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' Behold the desires of Nature, and the resignation of Grace! Nature says, *Let this cup pass:* Grace says, *Let thy will be done.* It is no rebellion against the will of God to desire that an evil may be removed; but only when we do insist upon it to be removed, in a manner, whether God will or no: that is, when we rage and storm if we have not our will; or take sinful courses to obtain it.

I am allowed the diligent use of all proper means, all lawful and appointed means of removing affliction. If I cannot prevent it, I will remove it; if I cannot remove it, I will bear it; if I cannot bear it, my next concern is, that sinking under it may be rather my calamity than my crime, and only prove the occasion of a fresh act of resignation to the method he chooses hereby of delivering me from all evil.

SECTION II.

When may our Mourning be esteemed excessive and immoderate.

WHEN the loss of some one mercy shall destroy the sense and relish of those that remain, is not that

excessive? "Let him take all, says passion, since he has deprived me of this." But what if God should take us at our word? How much more miserable should we be, than it is possible for any one loss to make us? Are all the mercies that remain worth nothing, because this one is taken away?

The comfort of other relations, the accommodations of life, the health of body, the capacities of mind; a share in the pleasure of angels, in contemplation of delightful truths, and sense of the Divine favour; the means of grace, an interest in Christ, the pardon of sin, and the hope of glory: Must all these things be as nothing, because the child is dead, or the husband, or the wife is gone before? Is not this enough to provoke God to go on, and make a full end of all? And to say in his wrath, "Since these things are not worth owning, they are not worth continuing; I will take them away. Go, Death, and kill the husband that is left, or cut off that wife, or child, or friend. Go, Sickness and smite the body with disease and languishing weakness: take away the health that is left, since it is esteemed as nothing now. Go, Reproach and Calumny, and blast the reputation. Losses and Crosses, take a full commission to make what ravages you please in an estate that cannot now be enjoyed."

Mourner. Ah, but the flower of all my comfort is gone! *the glory is departed!* I answer, thy glory is to do the will of God, and bear the burden he lays upon thee. This secures eternal glory. Be thankful you are out of hell. All is mercy on this side hell. And if he has added to that many other mercies, that are spared to thee, though often forfeited, as well as that which is gone; let the enjoyment of that remainder be an allay of grief, and a comfortable motive to thankfulness.

When we are so taken up with our own sorrows, as to regard nobody's else, we exceed. When all our concern for the sorrows and joys of others, and especially of the church of God, are entirely swallowed up in our private grief; this is to be too much shut up within our ownselves, and confined within the little circle of our

own affairs. If a piece of good public news will not make a mourner smile; if a national deliverance will not make him forget to weep, at least for some time, it is a sign of none of the best spirit. The public may justly leave him to his own bitterness. Eli's family afflictions were great, but the public loss broke his heart.

When our sorrows utterly unfit us for the duties of religion and the services of life, for any considerable time, then they are excessive. You were overset at first. The storm came down upon you unprepared; but do not make it your choice to be overwhelmed. God hath taken away that person, and you will not pray. Why, is there nothing now worth asking for? Will God supply you with breath for nothing but sighs and groans? If this blow will not bring you upon your knees, he can strike another. It is desperate language to say, Let him strike; there is nothing now wherein he can hurt me. God expects to hear from you another way: *If any be afflicted, let him pray.* God knows how it eases the mind, and brings in help. You cannot meditate: but you can sit alone for hours together, thinking upon a dead creature. Methinks the living saint in heaven should have a little of our heart. It should not always dwell in a coffin, and in a grave. Methinks the ever-living God is the more seasonable object to turn the mind to. The dear one is dead, 'but the Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock,' Psalm xviii. 46.

Mourner. I can think of nothing else.

Answer. There lies the excess of your grief. But is that the way to comfort, to turn our back upon the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation? You will not meet him in the closet, or in the sanctuary, because such an one is dead; that is, you will not have to do with God, because you are in a condition wherein you most need his assistance. God requires nothing of you impossible, or indecent; only let it be seen that the dead creature was not your God, but he that liveth for ever and ever.

When our sorrows make us heedless of the design of God in our affliction, and of the lessons we should

learn from his providence, then are they immoderate. 'My soul is weary of my life,' says Job, chap. x. 1. And yet, in his anguish, he is enquiring into the cause and design of his troubles. 'I will say unto God, do 'not condemn me: shew me wherefore thou contend-'est with me,' ver. 2. To be condemned of God, was what he feared more than any affliction; for that indeed would be a much more dreadful thing. The way to avoid that condemnation, is, to find out what God contends with us for; to remove it by repentance, and then it will be pardoned by his grace.

When we refuse to be comforted, it shows that our grief is swelling beyond its boundary, and ready to overflow all. As Jacob, when he thought his son Joseph was dead; 'Jacob rent his clothes, and refused to be 'comforted,' Gen. xxxvii. 34, 35. And so did another mourner we read of—'Lamentation and bitter weep-'ing; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be 'comforted for her children, because they were not,' Jer. xxxi. 15. If Rachel will refuse comfort from the word of God, and the suggestions of friends, she must go without it: she must mourn on, and weep on. To want comfort is an affliction; but to refuse it, when offered, is a sin. A time may come wherein you would be glad to have it if you could, or if there were any to administer it. The anguish of spirit may be too great to admit it presently. David was so troubled, he *could not speak;* and the Israelites in Egypt were in such anguish, they could not hear the comfortable overtures of Moses. 'Moses spake unto the children of Israel, but 'they hearkened not unto him, for anguish of spirit, 'and for cruel bondage,' Exod. vi. 9. But to refuse comfort, on purpose that grief may swell to the greater height; to feed your passion with fresh fuel, and stir it up with aggravating thoughts; this is not the way to have our sorrows easy or innocent.

When nature, grace, and time, shall have done their part toward the settlement of their minds, and they have got over it pretty well, so that the wound seems to be closed, they shall tear it open again, and make it bleed afresh, by the help of certain *mementos*, that seem to be

kept on purpose for that cruel service; a lock of hair, a picture, a relick of wearing apparel; or such like memorandum.

Mourner. Must we then forget our relations as soon as they are gone? Do you think I shall ever forget that dear creature?

Answer. But cannot we remember them without forgetting God, and ourselves, and scandalizing our religion? If we loved them so well, is there any danger of forgetting them too soon, that we should need art and monitors? Remember what was good, to imitate it; what was lovely, to be thankful for it. But as for these provocatives of sorrow, if I cannot view them with patience and moderation, I am not to be trusted with them. Rachel would have had her son's name Bennoni, a son of sorrow: Jacob knew that would have been a perpetual reminding him of the sorrowful occasion of his name, the loss of his beloved Rachel. He therefore calls him Benjamin, a son of the right hand. In such a world as this, the sorrow we cannot avoid is enough, if it be well improved.

When sorrow is suffered to prey upon health, in its degrees, or in its continuance, it is as criminal as mischievous. A man may pine away his health and life, as well as drink them away; or destroy them by any other extravagance. It wears away the strength, and wastes the vital spirits. Jacob said, that sorrow would 'bring down his grey hairs to the grave.' We know, by too many instances, that sorrow and trouble will not only bring grey hairs to the grave, but green ones too. 'Heaviness of spirit dries the bones,' Prov. xvii. 22. It wastes and consumes; so as to prove the truth of that text, in the letter of it. 'The sorrow of this world 'worketh death,' 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Sometimes it kills outright, as effectually as if a man were shot through. Sometimes more gradually indeed; but it then does its business as surely as a slow poison; for the food seldom nourishes that is mingled with tears. When the air doth not refresh, nor the faculties of nature perform their functions, then we say the heart is broke. And this is the language of antiquity, as

well as among us: witness the royal philosopher. 'By 'sorrow of heart the spirit is broken,' Prov. xv. 13. In the bills of mortality, we sometimes find this article, *Died of grief.* That article would be much larger, and oftener inserted, if all who died of grief were to be distinguished; but they are put down under the word *Consumption*, or any other disease, which grief brought upon them.

When our spirits are soured, and disgusted against every thing; when our passions are raised against men, and we murmur against God; when we give way to hard thoughts or language of God, because the 'Lord 'hath dealt bitterly with us,' Ruth i. 20. then our sorrows have greatly exceeded their bounds.

A heart without grace will bound and swell, and rise, as if it would fly in the face of God, upon the loss of some beloved and dear delight; and a heart with grace can hardly avoid something like it. An afflicted person is so apt to speak unadvisedly with his lips, that Satan took it for granted, that even such a good man as Job might be provoked to so extravagant a thing as to curse God to his face; or at least he knew, that he should take the most likely way to provoke him to it.

It was David, the mourner, that 'said in his haste, I 'am cut off from before thine eyes; verily, I have 'cleansed my hands in vain.'

It was Jeremiah, the mourner, who uttered those desponding words, 'My strength and hope are perish-'ed from the Lord. I remember mine affliction and 'my misery, the wormwood and the gall.' It was Jonah, in his affliction, made that fretful repartee, when the Lord said, 'Dost thou well to be angry? And Jo-'nah said, I do well to be angry, even to death;' If I fret myself to death, *is there not a cause?* Or, I will indulge my grief and vexation, though it cost my life. Surely this is the language of passion: surely this is to go beyond the allowed bounds.

We may exceed in the continuance of our grief. It may continue too long, as well as rise too high. The time for mourning has been limited by all wise nations; and the wisest people have made it the shortest. The

Egyptians, who knew not God, mourned seventy days for old Israel; and his own son Joseph 'made a mourning for his father but forty-seven days,' Gen. l. 3. For Aaron, Israel mourned thirty days; for Moses, thirty, and for Saul, seven: But it is one thing how long the ceremony of mourning may continue, and another thing how long the sorrow may endure. The ceremony may be over when the grief has no end but with the mourner's life, and he carries it with him to the grave.

SECTION III.

Submission to the will of God, and resignation to his Providence, with respect to our thoughts.

SHALL I admit a thought reflecting upon God and his conduct? Shall my ignorance impeach God's knowledge? I do not see the wisdom or the goodness of this providence! No more did Jacob see either wisdom or goodness in his loss of Joseph. 'All these things are 'against me,' says he, and yet God *meant it for good;* Gen. l. 20.

All these things are ordered by God. My present condition is his appointment. 'Afflictions rise not out 'of the dust,' though they sometimes hasten us thither; 'but out of the mouth of the Lord cometh not good and 'evil,' Lam. iii. 38. The origin of all evil is sin, and the direction of it all is in the hand of God. *I form the light*, of prosperity; *I create darkness*, of affliction; 'I make peace, and I create evil: I the Lord do all 'these things,' Isa. xlv. 7. We are apt to dwell upon second causes, and overlook the hand of God, who, though he cannot be the author of sin, he can over-rule the sins of others, so as to be a correction of our own iniquity.

Shimei's ill-nature and mortal enmity to the house of David, made him curse David; but David plainly discerned there was something more than Shimei's ill-nature, or attachment to the house of Saul, when he

said, *The Lord hath bid Shimei curse David.* The Jews by wicked hands crucified Christ; who yet said, *It is the cup which my Father hath given me; shall I not drink it?* As in a medicinal prescription, whatever the ingredients may owe their bitterness to, it is the skill and kindness of the physician that makes it up.

Since these things are ordered by God, they must needs have an end worthy of God to propose, and for me to attend to. None of his arrows are drawn at a venture. He always aims at something, which it is worth my while to aim at too. He for our profit. 'We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, 'and we gave them reverence; shall we not much ra- 'ther be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and 'live? For they verily for a few days chastened us, 'after their own pleasure [*and passion;*] but he for our 'profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness,' Heb. xii. 9, 10. To make us humble and holy; to improve the graces of his Spirit in us; to purge out our corruptions, and to mortify more the body of sin; —to wean us from this world, that we may love it less, and leave it with more ease; to prepare us for another world, and dispose us more to go thither.

This is the voice of the rod; these the ends of him who hath appointed it. And when these ends are attained, something more considerable is gained than what you have lost.

Mourner. It is hard for me to think so when under the pangs of sorrow. It enters deep, and wounds me sore. How can I ever say with David, 'All the paths 'of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep 'his covenant and testimony?' What, all the paths of the Lord? The rough and the thorny, and the difficult; where there seems to be nothing but severity? Friends and dear relations dead; estate sunk; health impaired; strength decaying; difficulties increasing on every side: Oh! he has touched me in a tender part! It is the apple of mine eye that the thorn is gone into. What have the promises produced to me? Might he not have taken a method that should have looked more like *mercy and truth?*

Answer. Can infinite wisdom be mistaken? Can infinite goodness be cruel? Can infinite truth be false? Allow him that *knows the end from the beginning*, to know better what is good for you, than you do for yourself; and to know how to come to his end the best way. Since he does not *willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men;* and since it is only, *if need be*, that we are in heaviness; what is it but *mercy and truth* that can make him do a thing unwillingly, and does it only *if need be?* Would it be mercy or truth to humour you in omitting what must *needs be?* You will allow him to judge of the necessity of it too, for the same reason: and then you will see reason to conclude with the royal mourner, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are 'right; and that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted 'me,' Psalm cxix. 75. Especially when you consider, in the next place,

That he will make this, and all other trials, *work together for good.* This is the general promise; 'We 'know that all things work together for good to them 'that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. We know it is so in fact, but we know not how. Indeed that knowledge is no business of ours; that part we leave to God. To believe the truth of it, to take the comfort of it, and to wait the issue of it; that is our part. Look upon every trouble through the Scripture; let God take what compass he please, it will come to this at last. How contrary soever to my liking things are at present, they will at length be just as I would have them. Only let me remember three or four things:

1. Let me take care to be a qualified object of this promise. It is *to them that love God*, to them that are the *called* or converted, *according to his purpose*, that this promise is made, that *all things shall work together for good.*

2. Let me take care to be right in my notion of good. If I have no notion of good, but what relates to the body, to the mouth, or the pocket, to eating and drinking, and other outward enjoyments; I may never think this promise fulfilled. But if I think that to be good, which is good for the soul; and that to be good, which

is good for eternity; the promise is as sure as it is rich, gracious, and comprehensive. And when the good things of this life are really good for us, they are certainly included in the promise, and may be expected from it.

3. Whether outward enjoyments are good for us, or no, we must leave him to judge who made the promise; and all the reason in the world he should, whose goodness made it;—whose wisdom and power must make it good. They who are the objects of this promise, who love God, will let him judge for them in this case. What a soul must that be which can say, "I will have the outward enjoyments of this life, whether they be good for me or not; and whether God judge them good for me or not?"—Does this look like one who is the object of that promise? One who loves God, and is *called according to his purpose?*

4. We must wait God's time, and expect the accomplishment of this promise only in his way. *He that believes, makes not haste;* nor says, by impatience, *Why should we wait on the Lord any longer?* Nor by taking unlawful ways; lest we forfeit our share in this promise by any such misbehaviour.

To quarrel with providence, is to charge God foolishly. It is as much as to say, that God governs the rest of the world well enough, but not in this particular. He orders all affairs well but mine. When others die, and other husbands mourn the beloved, the suitable, and the amiable creature gone; or when other widows weep in secret, and are left alone; then the lesson is, ALL MUST DIE: and submission was preached up, as wisdom, our best wisdom, as well as duty. 'Be-'hold, thou hast instructed many, but now it comes upon 'thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art 'troubled,' Job iv. 3. 5. It touches thee to the quick; and you find the lessons you taught to others, not so easy to learn yourself.

Shall the commander of an army be allowed to place his men according as he knows to be best for the service, whether the common soldier knows it or not? He assigns their post; he draws them out, and gives com-

mand. They form themselves in the face of danger; they march to the mouth of a cannon, or mount a breach, though ever so dreadful, and all for bread and clothes! A submission with which we hardly honour the Captain of our salvation, though it be for eternal life.

SECTION IV.

Of submission to the will of God, as it regards the frame of our spirit, and temper of our minds.

I HOPE I have learned something of this submission, since I am come to the following resolves; in which, I apprehend, it does in a great measure consist.

Resolved and agreed, That God's will ought to determine mine, and not mine pretend to determine the will of God. The question is put, Whose will shall be done? That petition in the Lord's Prayer, was made for this very case and season—*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* I should be ashamed to say otherwise; but actions have a language as well as words. I should have been ashamed to have said, in words at length, "Lord my will shall determine thine, and govern thine. I will have no will superior to my own;" but my actions have said as much; when by my murmurs, rebellious thoughts, sinful courses, and desperate uneasiness, I have behaved so contrary to the duty of a subject, and the relation of a child. Lord, forgive what is past! And now, 'Behold, here I am! Let the Lord do to me 'what seemeth good unto him,' 2 Sam. x. 12. 'Father! 'not as I will, but as thou wilt,' Luke xxii. 42.

Again—Resolved and agreed, That it is part of my business, in this world, to endure what I cannot innocently avoid. What can be avoided, we may, and ought to avoid: since 'no affliction for the present is joyous, 'but grievous;' but what cannot be avoided by lawful means, has the mark of being the will of God, that I should endure.—And, 'no man should be moved by

'these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are 'appointed thereunto,' 1 Thess. iii. 3. How do I know what I am appointed to, but by being unable to avoid it without sin, which is a worse evil than suffering, and comes in the room of a great excellence, namely, a submissive spirit.

Farther—Resolved and agreed, That I will neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked, Heb. xii. 5. To prevent which, I fly to the assistance of his grace. I consider, that it is one evidence of true grace to be willing to bear the will of God, as well as to do it. I call to mind the promises in this behalf made and provided. I look to the recompence of reward; and *I endure, as seeing him that is invisible.* I look to that particular blessing promised to him that endures in a right manner.—'Blessed is the 'man who endureth temptations; for when he is tried, 'he shall receive the crown of righteousness,' James i. 12. 'For which cause we faint not; for though our out-'ward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by 'day,' 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Moreover—Resolved and agreed, That I humble myself under the mighty hand of God. 'I am vile; what 'shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. 'Once have I spoke, but I will not answer; yea, twice, 'but I will proceed no farther,' Job xl. 5. That is to say, "I have not a word more to say; neither against thee, nor for myself. I have said too much already, and too *unadvisedly with my lips*, in defending myself, and arraigning thy providence; I will proceed no farther in such challenges. Forgive what is past, and assist me for the time to come."

God delights to humble those who will not humble themselves, and to exalt those that do. 'Humble your-'selves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God; that 'he may exalt you in due time,' 1 Pet. v. 6.

Mourner. My sorrows are great, but so is my guilt. Things are very bad with me, but they might have been worse: and they will be better, if I can behave so well under this trouble as to gain his pity and his favour. He has taken away, but he first gave.

God takes great notice of such a frame of spirit, and has a thousand ways to reward it. 'Because thine heart 'was tender; and thou didst humble thyself, the evil 'shall not be in thy day,' 2 Kings xxii. 19. Heaven will make amends for all sorrows and sufferings. Submission is the way to heaven; and these considerations are the way to submission.

SECTION V.

Of submission, as it respects our behaviour and carriage.

GRIEF is sometimes outrageous, and sometimes sullen. It will often say any thing that comes next, without grace or decency; as well as sometimes say nothing at all. Job sat seven days and seven nights silent, 'and 'none spake a word to him; for they saw that his grief 'was great:' and when he did speak, he cursed the day of his birth. David acted a better part, when he got up, *anointed, washed, and eat*, after the death of his child. There is a way of saying, *Thy will be done*, by the behaviour or gesture; with the eyes and hands, as well as with the tongue. Submission is a grace that reaches to the behaviour, the features, and the outward postures of body. The natural postures of grief have no offence in them; but there are unnatural distortions of rage and despair. I have seen some lift up their eyes and hands to heaven as if they threatened, rather than supplicated the Almighty; and heard them say such words as only served to provoke their own sorrow, and God's anger.

How much better it is to cast our present burden and future cares upon God, in a believing dependence upon his promises and goodness?—Treasure them up in your mind, for a sure recourse upon those trials you are most liable to. 'Lay up his word in thy heart,' Job xxii. 22.—'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not 'sin against thee.' Let the widow and the fatherless remember, that he has promised to be a 'Father to the

'fatherless, and a judge of the widow. Thou art the 'helper of the fatherless,' Psalm lxviii. 'In thee the 'fatherless find mercy,' Hos. xiv. 3. 'The Lord pre-'serveth the stranger. He relieveth the fatherless and 'the widow; but the way of the wicked he turneth up-'side down,' Psalm cxlvi. 9. 'Leave thy fatherless 'children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy wid-'ows trust in me,' Jer. xlix. 11. 'The poor committeth 'his cause to thee: thou art the helper of the father-'therless: a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of 'the widow in his holy habitation.' Let the childless remember what God says, 'That if such do choose the 'things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, 'even unto them will I give within my house, and with-'in my walls, a place and a name better than of sons 'and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, 'that shall not be cut off,' Isa. lvi. 4. 5. Let the friend-less and helpless remember, that God has promised to 'deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and 'him that hath no helper,' Psalm lxxii. 12. When lover and friend, 'when father and mother forsake me, then 'the Lord will take me up,' Psalm xxvi. 10. Lord re-member these words, *wherein thou hast caused me to hope*. Promises were made on purpose for God to ful-fil, and for us to trust in: and he that by faith humbly depends upon them, takes the best way to have these or some others, fulfilled to his seasonable comfort and relief.—'Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by 'prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your 'requests be made known unto God,' Phil. iv. 6. Doth not prayer and supplication signify a carefulness for something? namely, that which I pray and supplicate for? Doubtless, a care of the right sort, a care of the *means*, which is our part; such as prayer, supplication and diligence; and which discharges us from the bur-densome care of the *end*, which is God's part. It eases us from all distracting care about the *issue*. It relieves our anxiety for God's part, and our own also: for it is too much for any man alive, to have two such cares upon him at once, the care of the *means*, with their di-ligent use, and the care of the *end* also: that is, to have

God's care upon us, and our own too. One of these cares must be left to God. To cast upon God the care of the *means*, and to say, I will not pray, I will not use my endeavours, is carelessness and presumption; neither of which are Christian graces. To take upon us the care of the issue and the event, is distracting anxiety, and is the carefulness here forbidden, as invading God's province. Duty is mine; so far as *that*, I am to care about the end. Event is God's; and *that* not being in my power, is no object of my care, though it be of concern and expectation. It seems equally criminal and foolish to neglect our own power, or to invade God's.

Mourner. What if there be no means? I see no way!

Answer. Then we must *stand still, and see the salvation of God.*

Mourner. What if there be no salvation?

Answer. Why, then, I say, 'Though he slay me, yet 'will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15. *I am not better than my fathers; let me die.* When it is come to that, we must do as they did in Acts xxi. 14. 'And when he 'would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will 'of the Lord be done.' Good men have perished indeed from the earth; but it is only from the earth. They die from hence into immortality. They are gone, but not lost. *Some salvation* will always be ready to crown their faith and patience, and expose the angry impropriety of your question, *What if there be no salvation?* Good men may be afflicted, but cannot be miserable. If Dives shuts his door against Lazarus, Abraham's bosom is open. 'Say unto the righteous, it shall be well 'with them,' in this or the other world, or in both.

Let us *suit ourselves to our condition.* Let our minds agree with our station; our appetites and desires to our circumstances. This is another part of our submission as to our behaviour. The blow that we feel, should kill curiosity, vanity, lust, and pride. If we will never possess our souls in patience, but when they are humoured, they will sooner be undone than satisfied. He who enlarges his desires, makes the duty of submission so much the more difficult; for he has so many more cravings to provide for, and to be disappointed in.

Nor should we aim only at the decency of a mere patient behaviour, but should endeavour at some degree of *cheerfulness*, for the honour of God, and the ornament of religion. Let me shew what my religion can do in such a case, and of what use its principles are, towards the comfort, as well as support, of a sorrowful mind.

I read of some that could *rejoice in tribulation*, why should not I? If I am not yet able, I will try to learn that lesson, hard as it appears to me at present. It is no mark of the Divine favour to escape all troubles.—'Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the 'world, and increase in riches; they are not in trouble 'as other men,' Psalm lxxiii. 12. But I am sure of this, that to bear the hand of God, and resign to it, because *it is the Lord*, this is a mark of his favour and love. This grace bestowed is a greater gift than any thing he has taken away; a greater gain than any thing I have lost in my departed comforts, or disappointed hopes.—Common mercies are no proofs of special favour; but the grace that teaches us to joy in tribulation, and to say, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' comes to us with that address, 'Hail thou that art highly favoured 'of the Lord;'—and with that privilege the apostle speaks of, 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' 2 Cor. vi. 10.; sorrowful in appearance, but always rejoicing in reality; because in such a case there will always be to such a one more cause of joy than sorrow. 'Therefore 'I take pleasure in infirmity, in reproaches, in neces-'sity, persecution and distresses, for the sake of Christ. 'Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my in-'firmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me,' 2 Cor. xii. 9. 10. 'Though the fig-tree shall not 'blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour 'of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no 'meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and 'there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice 'in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,' Hab. iii. 17, 18. Whence had these men this secret? Cannot I have it at the same place? I come to the throne of grace, for this grace and mercy to help in this

time of need; that I may lay all at his feet, and bring every high thought to the obedience of faith, and every tumultuous thought into a calm submission to the will of God; and with cheerfulness proclaim to all, that I am pleased with my Governor, however irksome to flesh and blood this correction may be.

SECTION VI.

The impediments that hinder this so reasonable a duty, and so lovely a frame of soul, in a time of sorrow.

AN *evil heart of unbelief*, in whatever degree it be, does in the same degree lessen the influence that invisible things ought to have upon me. If I indeed believe that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, I shall not behave as one who thinks there is nothing in the case but death and parting. The eye that is kept on the future world will not always weep: 'Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God,' John xiv. 1. Is believing then an antidote against trouble of heart? Where there is no faith, there is no submission; where there is a weak faith, there is but a weak submission. We may expect that he will say to us, 'Be it unto you according to your faith.' We are not likely to endure well, without 'seeing him that is 'invisible.' And then our submission will be in proportion to what we discern in God by faith, and what we expect from him by hope. 'If ye will not believe, 'ye shall not be established;' neither in grace nor in comfort: 'but to him that believeth, all things are pos-'sible,' as it engages his help, to whom all things are easy. As all the pulses in the most distant veins of the body depend upon that of the heart, so it is with the movements of the soul: *As a man's heart is, so is he*; whether it be a heart of faith and patience, or an *evil heart of unbelief*.

Unbelief says, God's hand is shortened that he cannot save, or his goodness lessened that he will not; and this indisposes us to put ourselves under his protection. Unbelief says, that his bowels are closed up; and why then should we cast ourselves upon his mercy? How can a man part with beloved relations, who does not believe that he shall either meet them again, or not miss them? 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and 'why art thou disquieted within me?' Says David, *Why?* Whatever was the cause, the remedy was faith and hope. 'Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.' They who have no faith to believe that all things shall work together for good, must needs be a miserable prey to the grief of disappointments. They who cannot hope in God, when their soul is cast down and disquieted, cannot enter into this rest, *because of unbelief.* Excessive mourning, is mourning *as those without hope.*

Self-will, or an eagerness for our own will, is a great hindrance to submission. A man who is impatient of cross words or contradiction, as if born to have always his own will, always humoured and pleased, is greatly unprepared for trials, and likely to fret against God. Pharaoh is not the only man whose language has been, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' "I own no throne higher than my own; nor will I receive law from any other, God or man." The same says every one that disputes the supremacy with God, in contending whose will shall be done.

No people have their will less than those who are for having it always: they draw more troubles upon them, and feel them deeper. Generally this temper is its own punishment to a great degree. A root of bitterness, from which a thousand vexations spring up, that would have had no existence, or would have been far less afflictive to those who make a sacrifice of their will to the will of God. Take away self-will, and there would be no sin, no hell, no kingdom of Satan. Take away self-will, and you take away a thousand sorrows which

it only creates to itself, and which are escaped by the yielding will of resignation.*

We promise ourselves too much from this world, and from all our relations and conditions in it: And the higher we rise in our expectations and opinions of things, the lower we fall in the vexations of disappointment. Men launch into the world in as unaccountable a manner as we should think of those seamen, who, because it is fair weather when they set sail, make no provision for a storm. What confusion must they be in when the storm comes down? We must not promise ourselves an exemption from those troubles that are common to all mankind. We must not flatter ourselves to attain what we have in prospect, or hold long what we have in possession.

Great affections make way for great afflictions, and make submission to providence the harder. The advice of the apostle is very well suited to a world, *the fashion* or scheme of which *passeth away*. This 'I say, brethren, 'the time is short: It remains, that both they who have 'wives be as though they had none; and they that weep '(*the loss of them,*) as though they wept not; and they 'that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that 'buy, as they that possessed not; and they that use this 'world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world 'passeth away,' 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. Did not I know it was hastening to an end? Why did I set my heart upon it, as if it was more durable? Why did I make the parting more afflictive, and the resignation more difficult, by the intemperance of my affection?

The Jews had a custom, at their wedding feasts, for the married couple to drink in the same glass together, and then to break it in pieces; teaching them by that emblem, that whatever felicity they expected together, their lives, upon which it all depended, were frail and brittle as glass. No sooner joined, but they were

* Cesset voluntas propria, et non erit infernus. Civitas diaboli incipit ab amore sui. BERN.

If God would study a close, quick, and certain way of being revenged on a man, he need but open his stores, and bid him choose for himself. Mr. S. FORD.

warned to prepare for separation. So, in our form of matrimony, the clause, UNTIL DEATH DO US PART, is a memento to the same purpose.

It is as much my duty to pray that I may be willing and able to part with any dear comfort of life in a right manner, as to pray for its continuance. We are apt to be most earnest for their continuance; as if it was a greater thing for God to please us, than for us to please God. The grace that says, *Thy will be done*, is infinitely more necessary to me than any good thing God can take away, to try that grace, and shew me that I have it.

Mourner.—"Oh Lord, thou knowest how near that person lay to my heart; but thou knowest that thy favour is nearest still. I would not fear so much the losing any thing, as of offending thee. Thou wilt surely grant my request in one of these two things; either to continue the mercy I enjoy, or help me to resign it at thy call, in the manner thou shalt approve: and then, whatever loss there may be in such a removal, I am sure the sense of thine approbation is such a gain as can never cost me too dear."

He that will die well, must die daily, and practise upon the foresight of it. So he that will resign well, and with a becoming grace, must practise upon resignation, and frequently put cases to himself: What if I should return home this evening, and find my house in flames? That fair estate, which is now to supply my wants, and support my figure; what if it should take wings and fly away? What if the desire of mine eyes should be taken off with a stroke? Or I should see that pretty child lie a dead corpse? That which I now lay in my bosom, I shall not be able to bear in my sight? What should I then do? How should I behave? Am I prepared for such a case? If not, I have the more reason to think of it beforehand. If I am prepared for it, then I can better bear to think of it now; or else, how shall I bear the thing itself, when by refusing to think of it at all, I continue to make it more intolerable?

As hard as this practice seems to be, it is much harder to be surprized without ever having thought of the

matter, or preparing for it. Though hard, it is designed to make that easier, which otherwise is one of the hardest things in the world, and will be so always, the less it is thought of in time.

Another impediment to resignation, is a conceit of our own *deservings*.

How can that person submit to mean allotments of Providence, who fancies himself deserving of the best? The uneasiness with which a man takes a low rank in the world, is in proportion to the opinion of himself being qualified for higher stations. Modesty and humility save a deal of trouble here. "I have a great deal, for one that deserves nothing: Nay, for one who deserves misery! Let the Lord place me where he pleases; if it be out of hell, I shall have reason for praise and thanks, enough to keep out murmuring." You cry and swell, complain and repine: I ask you, Did God owe you any thing? Is he accountable to you? Do you deserve any thing? Who are you? And what are you more, or better, than those many who at this time are suffering for God, with faith and patience, in the want of all things; and think they had hardly any thing to ask for, on this side heaven, if they could but quietly serve God in the half of that, which can hardly make you civil to the Almighty, for want of more? To enlarge our desires is laying ourselves open to needless vexations, as numerous as our needless desires. He whose desires are an hundred times larger than others, is every day liable to so many hundred times more vexations and disappointments.

SECTION VII.

Help against immoderate grief, from some considerations with respect to God, who taketh away.

'IT is the Lord,' 1 Sam. iii. 18. This is the answer made to the heavy message brought by young Samuel

to old Eli. 'I will do a thing in Israel,' says God, 'at which both the ears of every one that hears it shall 'tingle:' that he would cut off all his family, and his father's house. 'Thou shalt see an enemy in my 'habitation; and there shall not be an old man in thine 'house for ever: And the man of thine, whom I shall 'not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine 'eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of 'thine house shall die in the flower of their age, and thy 'two sons shall both die in one day,' 1 Sam. ii. 31—34. Here is the death of children in the flower of their age; poverty extreme; extinction of his family, and till then, the branches of it should only live to plague the parent: a dreadful threatening! But he answers, *It is the Lord!*

His absolute *propriety* in us, and all that we have, is unanswerable. *The earth is* the *Lord's*, *and* the fulness thereof. The product, the inhabitants, the furniture of all worlds are his. *Shall he not do what he will with his own?* If I myself am his property, every thing I have must be so too.

His absolute *sovereignty* over all things, is uncontrollable. 'Behold, he taketh away, and who can hin-'der him?' Job ix. 12. 'He doth whatsoever he 'pleases in the army of heaven, and among the inhabi-'tants of the earth.'

His transcendant majesty and excellency are not to be disputed. 'Shall not his excellency make thee afraid' to murmur against him, and to find fault with his ways; 'and his dread fall upon thee?' Job xiii. 11.

He that sits on the throne of the universe, who shakes heaven and earth with his voice; who hath power to lodge a heaven or hell in thy breast, by his smiles or frowns, according as he pleases to reward thy submission, or punish thy discontent; who can employ legions of angels to be thy guard, or devils to be thy tormentors; he that can silence thy murmurs with thunder, or stop thy insolent breath with fire and brimstone, and horrible tempest; *shall not his excellency make thee afraid?* He who dwells in light that is unapproachable, before whom angels veil their faces; shall I lift up my

bold front against this God, and charge that brightness with a spot, that wisdom with folly, and that justice of his with an iniquity?

His infinite perfections, what language do they speak? He is infinitely wise, and cannot err: Infinitely powerful, and cannot be resisted: Infinitely holy, and cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence: Infinitely good and can do no evil; likewise true, and cannot falsify his word. If it were possible to take the universal management out of his hands into your own, it would be the best way to replace it in the hand of God again. It is he to whose will all the world beside complies, why should not I? And when I read that Christ himself said, 'I am come to do thy will, O God;' and 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt;' who am I, that I should pretend to speak any other language.

Consider the relation in which he stands to us. My will he made; shall he not give laws to his own creature? Did he make this hand to strike at himself? This breath, this tongue to speak against him? and this will to rebel against himself? As I am a dependant creature, in him I live, move, and have my being: As I am an expectant creature, is it the way to obtain my will *of* him, to deny the homage of my will *to* him? As I am a sinful creature, have not I enough of guilt upon me already? Should I swell the account, and increase my misery? As I am an accountable creature, he is my judge; as I am a recoverable creature, he is my Saviour: And am I angry with any of his methods toward making all these ideas concur to my salvation? To be redeemed from the tyranny of my own will, and fancy, and appetite, is no small part of the redemption by Jesus Christ. Did he give himself up to death for us; and shall I think it too much to give my will up to his? Shall the redeemed from thraldom dispute the orders of the Redeemer? Shall servants dispute the will of their master? and subjects say to such a king, 'What doest thou?' Are we his friends upon any other terms than doing whatsoever he commands us? And if, as children, we go to him as 'our Father who is in heaven,' must we not add, 'Thy will be done?'

Whether we submit to his will or no, his will *shall be done.* 'His counsel shall stand, and he will do all 'his pleasure.' You may as well submit by grace, and have the comfort of so doing, as be forced to it without grace, and without comfort, whether you will or no. If it be an act of homage, your submission has a reward; but if it be merely because you cannot help it, you have only sorrow for your pains. What does all my fretting amount to? Will it change the course of providence, and allay griefs?

Consider how much God might have taken away besides: he might have left me no one comfort; he might have taken away all as well as a part. He might have given up my soul to terror, my body to disease, and my affairs to confusion and calamity.

It is by his providence that all things are conducted; the most casual, the most trival. *Lots*, the most casual, (Prov. xvi. 33.) and a sparrow falling to the ground, or a hair, the most trivial things.

If there was no providence, we should want one of the best antidotes against the fear of what is to come, and the sorrow for what is past; for, as bishop Patrick observes, all the care would then lie upon ourselves, and be too much for us. But when we think of infinite wisdom and power governing all things, one need not be at a plight, as if we and chance were to govern the world. Some have satisfied themselves with the thought, that it is in vain to be troubled, since things must be as they will be; but this is cold comfort, to be content on mere necessity, though it is the main of what the heathen comforters afforded. Thanks be to God, we have something better. That the world is not governed merely by the will of God, but also by his wisdom and goodness. And he disposes of all things, not only as absolute Lord, that we may be sensible of his power, but as a loving Father, that we should be sensible of his goodness. It is a distrust of God to be over-troubled at what is to come: it is impatience to fret at what is present, and anger against him to be over-concerned about what is past. This frame of spirit finds fault with his wisdom and blames his goodness; depresses his power, and

reprehends his faithfulness in the disposal of things; and therefore it is a sinful frame, and speedily to be amended.

The wise and great ends he is advancing to his own glory, and my good, is another consideration. God hath as much right to use me to the purposes of his own glory, whether perceived by me or not, as I have to the use of any instrument in my house, or of any servant, without acquainting him with my purposes. Thus, in the cases of Abraham, Joseph, and Job: had they not been used by God much otherwise than their natural will inclined them to choose, we had lost the benefit of the finest instances of submission in the world.* 'O 'Lord! we are thy clay, and thou the potter. We are all 'the work of thy hands,' Isa. lxiv. 8. 'Cannot I do 'with you as the potter, saith the Lord? Behold, as 'the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand,' Jer. xviii. 6.

Whatever you lose or part with, you cannot be miserable while you have this Lord to be your God and portion! the God who made the creatures we are so fond of, and gave them all that loveliness which made us so fond of them: and has in himself all that loveliness which he gave, and infinitely more. How does it sound to say, "I am undone, for I have nothing but God left?" Surely God can supply the room of any departed creature, though the whole world cannot fill up the room of a departed God. To lose a creature, and find a God, has been an happy exchange to some, whose losses have brought them to know God and themselves, to much better purpose than ever.

He that takes away, will give *more grace* in time of need; and of *his strength* to bear any burden, however disproportioned to our *own*. 'He giveth more grace,' and more still, as the case requires: For God 'is faith-'ful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what

* "I see God will have all my heart, and he shall have it;" was a fine reflection made by a lady, when news was brought of two children drowned, whom she loved very much.

'we are able, but with the temptation will also find a 'way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' Escape *by* bearing, though not from bearing. He is supposed to escape well, who is made *able to bear*.

Submission to his will, is one of the best ways of glorifying God, and the most acceptable sacrifice we can make. It supposes you will dispute nothing with him, after having surrendered your own will to the will of God. Martyrdom itself is but the consequence of that disposition, and will be sure to follow, when God calls this grace to act its part that way. The same grace that enables us to suffer *from him*, will help us to suffer *for* him.

To sacrifice a will to God, is that 'reasonable ser- 'vice, and living sacrifice, which is holy and accept- 'able :' as much beyond the sacrifices of Aaron, as the soul and spirit of an obedient Christian are beyond the dead carcase of a beast. Turn mountains into altars, and offer upon those altars the cattle of a thousand hills: pour out ten thousand rivers of oil for a drink-offering, it would never be accepted instead of that demand, 'My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes ob- 'serve my ways.'*

Without this surrender of soul, he calls all the outward practices of religion but flattery with the lips: and with very good reason; for men count themselves flattered, when our behaviour is not at all agreeable to the fine things we say to them. So are we accounted to flatter God, when we ascribe to him those perfections, and give him those titles, which, when it comes to the point of trial, we seem to unsay again. We call him the Most High God, but by and by something else appears higher in our esteem and regard; that husband, that child, that wife, or that estate, or honour. We call him most Glorious, and yet glory more in something else. You may compliment him with the title of Faith-

* The Chaldee Paraphrase upon Psalm l. 23. 'Whoso offereth 'praise, glorifieth God; and to him that orders his conversation a- 'right will I shew the salvation of God,' is "Whoso subdues and destroys the principle of inordinate affection, it shall be accounted to him for a sacrifice of praise."

ful and True; but while he sees that you will not trust him in the way of your duty, that you will not take his word in a promise, for a work of piety to God, or charity to man, he counts himself flattered. If you call him *Lord, Lord*, and yet 'do not the things that he says;' if you call him *your God* and *portion*, and yet, upon the taking away of what was apparently more dear to you, your outrage of complaint speaks that language; 'Ye 'have taken away my gods, and what have I more?' however it may appear to men, what God thinks of it all, he has told you in those words; 'They remember-'ed that God was their rock, and the high God, their 'Redeemer: nevertheless, they did flatter him with 'their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues,' Psalm lxxviii. 35, 36. He saw it to be all flattery and lies.

Do you see, says God, how that person behaves in the offices of devotion? Can any body be more assiduous in reading, prayer, hearing, and sacraments? You shall now see what all this is good for, and of how little worth. God puts forth his hand accordingly, and takes away the delight of his eyes with a stroke; when presently, the God that he seemed to adore with so much resignation can hardly have a good word, or a good thought; can hardly be allowed to be wise, or good and just, or any thing but a very severe and hard master. He not only mourns, but he pines, and consumes: he rages against me; I and my heaven now are cyphers, in comparison of the creature that I have done no harm to, but only removed, for purposes he himself will rejoice at when he comes to know them.

In short, this submission is the sum and substance of religion, and the beauty of Christianity. 'Upon entering the school of Christ, this is the first lesson proposed to be learned, to *take up his cross and follow him*; and all that we do or suffer in religion afterward, is either expressive of this, or instrumental towards it. If we pray, it is that his 'will be done on earth, as it is in 'heaven.' If we read. it is that we may know 'what 'is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of 'God:' to learn moderation in prosperous joy, calm-

ness in troubles, composure of mind, with a decent vent of sorrow in every distress.

SECTION VIII.

Help against immoderate grief, with respect to the persons departed.

HAD not God a property in them as well as you, prior to yours, and superior? They were his before they were yours; they are his now they are no longer yours; by a thousand obligations, ties and relations, that ought to take place of all your claims and pretensions.

Should they have been immortal here, only to please you? to have lived, though weary of it; to have staid, though longing to be gone; and in misery, though fit for happiness? Should they be kept in the troubles of life, in the pains of sickness, and in the infirmities of age; or at best, in the insipid repetition of the same round of things, only to prevent a vacancy in any of your amusements or delights? Is this thy kindness to thy friend?

Some parting time must come, why not this? If the time of parting with them was left to our choice, it would greatly increase our confusion.

They are extinct and gone out of being. Their manner of existence is changed, but the existence itself is not lost. 'They that are fallen asleep in Christ, are 'not perished;' 1 Cor. xv. 18. They are not blotted out of being, nor out of life, upon our Christian scheme.

The degree of happiness in their present state of separation, whatever it is, affords a comfortable thought. If they are absent from you, and from their own bodies, they are *present with the Lord;* which, I suppose, you will allow to be *far better.* So much better indeed, that for the sake of entering into it, it is worth a good man's while to die at any time, and leave any company upon earth, though ever so pleasant or good.

The spirit, that returns to God who gave it, is received by God, and welcomed in a manner suitable to the relation and character in which it arrives there. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they 'rest from their labours.' They could have little or no rest here, what with labour and trouble, temptation and sin. What a vast improvement and knowledge must a disincumbered soul make in such a situation? 'Now 'we see darkly as through a glass, but then face to face.' If the pleasure be not so complete as after the resurrection, it must however be unspeakable, beyond all that this world affords. They are sure of their own salvation, and of being the heirs of glory. And if the pleasure of assurance here be so transporting, as to give sometimes a 'joy unspeakable and full of glory:' while we say with the apostle, 'we know and have believed 'the love which God hath towards us:' what will it be for a soul to find itself safely landed in the world of perfection? among spirits of just men made perfect; freed from all imperfections, natural and sinful; returned to their native soil, having left that foreign country where they were *pilgrims and strangers*, and got home to their father's house, 'where there are many mansions?' in the the best society and company, as well as the best place? reviewing past dangers and labours? admiring the wisdom of God, and his goodness, that has brought them thither; and especially the goodness of that stroke we are mourning over here? Their worship must needs be spiritual, who are all spirit; without weariness, failure or interruption. They have glorious scenes at present before them, and pleasing expectations of great and more glorious things: such as the accomplishing the number of the elect, and all that shall be saved; the fulfilling the great periods of prophecy that remain; the downfall of Antichrist; the glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ; the resurrection of the body; the abolition of death, and the solemn coronation of all the conquerors through *the blood of the Lamb*, to a kingdom that can never be shaken.

Is this a condition to be lamented with incessant tears? Is it for people who are in such a case as this,

that we go up and down in black, with downcast looks, and weeping eyes? What one article of this happiness aforesaid is not worth more than the longest life of pleasure and honour in the world? One would think that these things only wanted to be believed and thought on. Would we fetch them back from this condition if we could? I am afraid we are so selfish, that if the resurrection power were lodged in our hands for one day, we should immediately run to the graves of our dear departed, and fetch them back again. To stop our sorrows for a while, we should begin theirs afresh, and bring them back to misery. They no sooner enter heaven, but they wish they had been sooner there. And the next wish is, that we may be with them too as soon as may be: and yet we wish a quite contrary way.

I think of the happy meeting again, which all the world shall not be able to hinder, after a few days are past. Let us not behave as if we were never to meet again. Do not mourn *as without hope*. Our religion teacheth us to believe, that in the separate state we shall not be without the society of our departed godly relations and friends. The separate soul of the beggar, Lazarus, is represented as in the company, nay, in the bosom of his father Abraham; and the penitent thief was promised to be with Christ in paradise. The spirits of just men are not perfected in order to be an assembly of mutes: nor is it likely they should be strangers to one another, when conversation in this imperfect world produces acquaintance and social endearment.

There will indeed be different ranks and orders of saints; different degrees of reward there, as of holiness here, and consequently of apartments and situations. But is it not the same in this world? Is every one in the same rank and station; of the same character or title and endowments? And yet we know one another, and converse together; a great deal of the beauty and pleasure of society arising from this variety, as it will also there.

At the resurrection you shall meet again in your glorified bodies, as well as perfect spirits. For, 'all that 'sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;' and will

'change their vile bodies, and make them like to his 'own glorious body. It was sown a natural body; it 'shall be raised a spiritual body,' freed from all elementary dross; will feel no pain, can need no food; will never be weary, however exercised or employed; without any appetites that tend to inordinancy. Our bodies then will be immortal. 'The children of the 'resurrection die no more.' Incorruptible; 'sown in 'corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' You will meet them with all these improvements, and to all these degrees far more delightful than ever.

God will bring them with him as part of his glorious train: when Christ shall 'be glorified in all his saints; 'and admired in all that believe;' as the trophies of all his conquests, the vessels of his grace, the members of his body, the spouse of his love, the shining instances of his faithfulness and power, the assessors of his court of judgment, and partakers of his glory.

How joyful will that meeting be! How happy! How glorious, never to part more! You were not always together here; but you shall be always together after that meeting. The parting kiss, the word *farewell*, have no more room for ever. This meeting together again, is what Christ purchased: 'For to this end Christ died 'and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the 'dead and the living,' Rom. 14. 9. This meeting together again is what the word of God has promised: 'For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, 'that we shall be caught up together with them in the 'clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we 'ever be with the Lord,' 1 Thess. iv. 15.

This is what the great God hath promised, and is very well able to perform. 'He is able to keep you 'from falling, and to present you faultless before the 'presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,' Jude 24, 25. 'And they that sleep in Jesus will God bring with 'him,' 1 Thess. iv. 14. The return of Christ, and of those who sleep in him have the same grounds of credibility. 'If we believe that Christ died and rose a-'gain,' then if you believe one you may believe the other: nay, you must and ought to believe the other,

upon the credit of the same evidence and authority. 'For if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is 'not Christ risen,' 1 Cor. xv. 13. This general meeting is designed for general satisfaction. John xiv. 20. 'At that day ye shall know.' God the Father will see, with satisfaction, the work of his hands in perfection, made fit to receive the communication of his endearments. The Lord Jesus Christ 'will see the travail of 'his soul, and be satisfied' in the full accomplishment of his design, in their complete felicity. The Holy Spirit will see, with satisfaction, the final success of his operations, in our perfect holiness and happiness. Angels will be pleased to see the success of their ministrations; and gladly welcome us, the partners of their joys. And as to ourselves, what an inexpressible reciprocation of endearing love, and multiplied joy, to find ourselves all met together after our parting sorrows? When all things and persons, any way offensive, shall be gathered out and thrown aside. No falsehood, rancour, partiality, mistake, prejudice, infirmity, passion, or pride, shall be met with there; nor any thing to hinder the heavenly pleasure circulating through every heart, and dwelling upon every face and tongue. You do not mourn as those in Acts xx. 35. 'Sorrow-'ing because they should see his face no more.'

Of immoderate grief we may say, as Solomon does of extravagant mirth, *What doth it?* What doth it for them who are gone, or for you? It may do us much hurt, but it can do them no good. It may weaken our bodies, and damage our health; it may sadden our spirits, deprive us of the comforts of life, and indispose us for the duties of it. And what then? What advantage to the departed from so costly a sacrifice to their memory? Do they need your tears, who have for ever taken leave of weeping? Could your cries call back the departed spirit, and awaken the body into life; could you water the plant with your tears, till it revived, you might weep like a cloud, and call nothing excessive that was likely to prove successful. But there are no Elijahs now, who may stretch themselves upon the child, and bring back the soul. It is more reasonable

to conclude with David; 'Now he is dead, wherefore 'should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall 'go to him, but he shall not return to me,' 2 Sam. xii. 23.

But if we could, would we have them walk over the precipice once more? Would we have them fight the battle over again, run the race again, be tempted, sin, and suffer again? Should they come back for our gratification, from that holy place to this place of sin? from that happy place to this place of trouble? from joy to sorrow, from rest and peace to new vexations? Their sentiments are different, their affections raised and ennobled; and as well as they loved you, they would not come back to you for all this world: and, as well as you loved them, you cannot, it seems, wish them joy, of their new elevation and dignity. Should not our godly friends be allowed to wear the crown they have been fighting for, and the prize for which they have been running.

SECTION IX.

Help against inordinate sorrow, from some considerations with regard to ourselves.

SELF-LOVE is at the bottom of our sorrow. I have lost a pleasure, and an advantage. I am mourning over the living rather than the dead. If one, every way the same, would make me easy, the sorrow is not for the departed, but for myself who survive.*

No strange thing has befallen me; nothing but what is common to men. 'Tis no more strange that a man should die, than that he should be born. Am I better than my fathers, who are dead and gone? *Whom makest thou thyself?* Where is the sense and reason of pretend-

* CICERO *on the loss of* SCIPIO. Nihil enim mali accidisse Scipioni puto; mihi accidit, si quid accidit. Suis autem incommodis graviter angi; non amicum, sed scipsum amantis est. *De Amic.*

ing to an exemption from the common lot of mankind? 'Beloved, think it not strange, as if some strange thing 'had happened unto you,' 1 Pet. iv. 12. for this is no strange thing, that a mortal should die.

I come into a family, and see one in a corner weeping and sighing: another is fallen upon a couch, unable to hold up the head; another is run up to a chamber, like David, to weep and cry out, 'Oh Absalom; my son, my son.' What is the matter? Why, one that was born to die, is dead! Was it the first child or husband that ever died? No. Had you a patent from Heaven against the common lot? No. Would you have had God made him immortal to please you? 'He teareth himself 'in his anger. Shall the rock be removed out of its 'place for you?' Job xviii. 4.

How many mercies and comforts are continued to thee, that might also have been taken away? and how many troubles prevented, that might have befallen you? You have lost some children; it might have been all. You have lost all; it might have been your husband too, or wife, at the same time. You have lost husband, or wife; it might have been also estate, and all the means of subsistence. Or suppose that is gone too; you have liberty, health, peace, and friends. Or suppose they are also gone; you are out of hell, and within reach of heaven: which, I will say, is a greater thing than any you have lost, or all these put together. Pardon of sin, and peace with God, may still be yours.

Mourner. These, I fear, are not mine.

Answer. Nay, then it is time to mourn over something else than a dead friend. To mourn over a dead soul of your own, to mourn over a lost God, to sorrow for sin; these are infinitely more to your purpose than sorrowing for the dead. And there is at least this room to rejoice, that all these spiritual blessings *may be had.* You may be pardoned, accepted, sanctified, and saved. And it is a matter of great comfort that these things are possible, and within reach.

Mourner. But I would have had these spiritual blessings, with the life and enjoyment also of those that are gone.

Answer. That is, you would have every thing according to your desire and fancy; that God and providence should take their orders from you, and consult your liking, before they execute their decrees. But, 'should it be according to thy mind!' Job xxxiv. 33. He that has a pillow to lay his head upon, and yet (as one says) will needs lay it upon a stone; he that has many convenient seats to sit upon and nothing will serve him but a bush of thorns; surely they must be very much in love with sorrow and melancholy, who enjoy so many blessings, and yet will slight all the pleasures of them, to pine away in the company of their wants. Understand what you now possess, as you would do if it were taken away, and then you will have a better relish for it.

The miseries and troubles entailed on the posterity of Adam are numerous. They are compared to the sparks that fly up, for number. It is a mercy we escape any of them; that all these sparks do not kindle upon us together; that all these troubles do not seize upon us at once; that out of so many miseries we should have so few, when we are born to all, by descent; subject to all, by nature; deserving of all, by sin.

Do you forget what your sins deserve? 'Shall a 'living man complain, a man for the punishment of his 'sin?' Lam. iii 39. *A living man.* when you might have been dead? *for the punishment of sin*; when you might have been damned? The punishment of sin, on this side of hell, is always less than our iniquities deserve.

Mourner. 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, 'because I have sinned against him.'

Answer. "Let every man," says one, "when he computes what he wants of his desires, reckon as exactly how far he is short in his duty; and when he has duly pondered both, he will think it a very easy composition, though his wants should be unsupplied, provided his sins be pardoned; and will see cause to sit down contentedly with honest Mephibosheth," 2 Sam. xix. 23. 'What right have I yet to cry any more to the king?'

The good of affliction in general ought to be taken into the account, as another consideration to assuage our griefs. *He for our profit* chastises, says the apostle; and *it was good for me that I was afflicted*, says David.

Afflictions have a tendency to awaken our repentance; to stir us up to 'search and try our ways, in 'order to turn our feet unto God's testimonies. I will 'go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their 'offence. In their affliction they will seek me early,' Hos. v. 15. And so it proved, ch. vi. 1. 'Come let 'us return to the Lord: he hath torn us, and he will 'heal; he hath broken us, and he will bind us up.' They help to wean us from this world, and make us more willing to depart. As we must needs be less fond of the world, the more troublesome it is to us; and as it makes our dying the more easy and more welcome, to have those sent before us for whose sake we might desire to live, and with whom we desire to be. We have fewer ties and engagements to earth. The fibres being cut off, and the roots loosened, the tree falls with greater ease.

Afflictions bring us to thoughtfulness and consideration, when all other means in the world can hardly do it. A man that can sit at a sermon as unmoved as if the joys of heaven, the sorrows of hell, and the eternity of both, were no part of his concern; the excellency of God, the vanity of the world, the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness, shall leave him unmoved, if not asleep: he little regards the message, or the messenger; but let God send one of Job's messengers to tell him such a ship is lost, his house is burnt, or such a dear relation dead; presently he is awake, and has more thoughts of heart in an hour, than he had before in a month.

The patient bearing of such afflictions, and the sanctified improvement of them, is one mark of our sonship, and the love of God to us. Should you lose the comfort of such an evidence by impatience? Heb. xii. 7. 'If you endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with 'sons.' To endure, seems to signify more than merely

to be chastised; namely, to accept the chastisement as from the hand of God, and to bear it with becoming decency and patience. There is one remark more, proper for some mourners, from these words: 'If ye endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with sons.' What a mistake is it then to say, "If I was a child of God, he would not deal with me in such a manner;" when the text says, 'If ye endure chastening, he dealeth with you as with sons?'

Affliction well sustained improves every part of our religion. It teaches compassion and sympathy towards others in their troubles. It gives an edge to our devotion, and ardency to our prayers, tenderness to our heart, and a life to our graces: it is the trial and triumph of our faith. Patience hath its perfect work; our resolutions for God are confirmed, so that we take faster hold of God, and of those things that cannot be taken from us.

Our sorrows, at longest, are but short; and we shall shortly ourselves go the same way. How diminutively does the apostle speak of the afflictions of this present time? 'Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. You call them *heavy*, he calls them *light;* and those light afflictions but *for a moment;* and that moment of light afflictions *worketh for us*. You are apt to think they all work *against* you, but they work *for* you 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight 'of glory.' The contrast lies between *affliction* and *glory; light* affliction, and the weight of glory; a light affliction for a *moment*, and weight of glory *eternal:* spoken as much like an orator, as like an apostle. And who was it that said all this? One that knew as well what affliction was; one that had as much of it to his share, as any man in the world. 'In labours more a-'bundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more 'frequent; in deaths often. Of the Jews five times 'received I forty stripes, save one: thrice was I beat-'en with rods; once stoned; thrice suffered shipwreck: 'a night and a day was I in the deep. In journeying 'often: in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in 'perils by mine own countrymen; in perils by the hea-

'then; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; 'in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren; 'in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often; in 'hunger and thirst; in fasting often: in cold and na-'kedness; besides the care of all the churches,' 2 Cor. xi. and yet, *light afflictions!*

'The time is short: it remains, that they that weep, 'should be as if they wept not.' 1 Cor. vii. 'The end 'of all things is at hand.' I shall shortly know myself what it is to change worlds. 'Tis more to the purpose to prepare for my own death, than fruitlessly to lament that of another. And to make sure of meeting my godly friends, is more now my business, than to lose time in bewailing their parting. 'Establish your hearts, for 'the coming of the Lord draws nigh,' James v. 8.

It will be a double loss to lose the dear relations, and to lose the benefit of the affliction too: it is enough to have lost *them.* Shall I lose the spiritual advantage that might be gained by such a trial, and into which it might be improved?

Patient submission gives the surest possession of ourselves, and the best enjoyment of every thing else. 'In 'patience we possess our souls,' Luke xxi. 19. Without it, we have lost possession of ourselves: and he that does not enjoy himself, can enjoy nothing else; for whatever is poured into a tainted vessel is all spoiled.

It is a dangerous thing to provoke God by obstinate grief, *lest* a *worse thing come unto us.* For he hath said, 'With the froward I will shew myself froward,' Psal. xviii. 26. 'He that hath a froward heart findeth 'no good,' Prov. xvii. 20. 'Thorns and briers are in 'the way of the froward. He that keeps his soul (quiet 'and submissive) shall be free from them,' Prov. xxii. 5. And after this, *Do I well to be angry?* Would any one choose to walk upon thorns and briers, that could pick out an easier path? Where one tear falls upon the account of complying with God's will, a multitude fall in consequence of having our own will. Not only the miseries of this life, but the eternal miseries of the life to come, are owing to this unresigned self-will. It may

be written on many a tomb—HERE LIES THE BODY OF N. N. BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE HIS OWN WILL.

SECTION X.

Help against immoderate grief, from considerations with respect to others, and the world about us.

COMPARE your case with that of others, and you may easily observe more miserable and mournful ones. There are a thousand persons with whom you would not change conditions. By what law is it, that you must only gaze at those above you, and take no notice of those below? That you must look on him only who is carried on men's shoulders, and think it a fine thing to be so mounted, but never consider the poor men that carried him, whose place you would by no means accept of. "You look with a greedy eye upon such a one's wealth," says bishop Patrick, "would you have it with his cares and fears, his conscience and mind? His ignorance; perhaps his folly and vices? His ill taste of things, and incapacity of intellectual pleasures? His uncomfortable prospects?"

Mourner. No! I would be myself what I am, with the addition of what I want.

Answer. Are you sure of continuing what you are with that addition? Since no one can have all things, is not yours a good lot? What pretences have you, for every good thing to centre in yourself? Was it always as well with you as it is now? Formerly you had no being: formerly you had none of those relations or possessions you now lament. You have lost that which some never had. Can you say, you had rather never to have had them, than to lose them? If it was a good thing, the having of it for a time was a greater good than not to have had it at all.

Compare yourself with the miserable sorrows and sufferings of others. You will find such a one has lost

her pretty children; and at the same time a loving husband, that was better to her than ten sons. Another has lost a near relation, and with that near relation, away went the means of subsistence. The sons of Zedekiah were slain before his face; and then his own eyes were put out, and he himself led into captivity; 2 Kings xxv. David had the mortification of a beloved son dying in actual rebellion against his father, his prince, and against his God. How much more terrible was that, than to close his eyes in a peaceful way? The mother of the Maccabees saw her seven sons tormented to death before her face, and she afterwards underwent the same. The sufferings of the primitive Christians, how grievous! The patient resignation of our English martyrs to be burnt, how remarkable, how affecting, how glorious! If mankind were to bring together all their several troubles and calamities, in all their circumstances of good and bad that attend them, and lay them in one common heap, on this condition, that when they had so done, every man was to come again to take up an equal portion of the miseries of life, and divide them equally, a great many who now complain would gladly take up what they brought, and go away contented.

What if the great God designs that others, who look on, should have the benefit of my example and good behaviour under such a trial as this? Hath he not a right to use me for such a purpose? And does it not become me to comport with it, and behave accordingly? Job lost his children, his estate, his health, and, in some measure his reputation with his friends, his ease and peace; and all this to shew the world a pattern of patience: shall others have no benefit from the example of our behaviour? Though God can never want a cause of inflicting evil where sin is, yet this shews, that sin is not always the cause. 'Hast thou considered my 'servant Job,' says God to Satan, 'that there is none 'like him in the earth, although thou movest me against 'him, to destroy him without a cause?' Job ii. 3.

This resignation is the most distinguishing character of a Christian; that which does most undoubtedly distinguish good men from bad. The externals of reli-

gion cannot do it, because they are common to the hypocrite and to the sincere. The hypocrite can hear and read, sing psalms and pray, and receive sacraments, as the true Christian does, and administer them too, and preach; but to give up the will to God at his disposal, and obey his will, is what no hypocrite can do, and continue such: for it is the essence of hypocrisy to pretend only to let God have our will, and yet resolve to have our own. And it is the evidence of sincerity, to be thankful if God will let us have our own will; but contented with his, and submissive to it. All other parts of religion, I say, lie in common. If you hear sermons ever so attentively, the hypocrite will sit as demurely: 'They sit before me as my people sit.' Herod *heard* John *gladly, and did many things.* If you pray fervently and frequently, the hypocrite may be as frequent, long, and copious. The Pharisees, *for a pretence, made long prayers.* You cannot come to the sacrament oftener, nor behave with more devotion than they do. Judas sat down with the twelve. If you entertain good discourse with great readiness in the Scripture language, the hypocrite can do the same. Men may preach to others, and be cast away themselves; may be companions to good men, as Demas was to Paul, and yet be *lovers of this present world*, so as to forsake the disciples for it: men may be any thing, and do any thing short of this resigned will to God, and yet be no Christians. But the surrender of our will to God, is a sacrifice of that sort, which demonstrates him that makes it to be a Christian indeed.

The children of wrath are described from their not having resigned their will to God: 'Fulfilling the de-'sires of the flesh, and of the mind,' Eph. ii. 3. that is, their own wills, and not God's; their own wills in opposition to God's. And, 'they have altogether broken 'the yoke, and burst the bonds,' Jer. v. 5. 'Let us 'cast away his cords from us, and break his bonds in 'sunder,' Psalm ii. 3. The children of God on the contrary, are described from the entire surrender of their will to God. 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves 'according to your former lusts,' not acting merely ac-

cording to your own will; 'but, as he who hath called 'you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversa-'tion.' David was a man 'after God's own heart, and 'served his generation according to the will of God;' while others are described as 'walking after their own 'imagination and lust,' Jer. xxiii. 17.

The devil will let you have as much religion as you please, without this; because he knows all religion, that leaves the will of man unresigned to God, will never rescue the soul out of his hands.

Immoderate passion, for losing or gaining any thing in this world, is a reproach to religion, to good principles, and the best prospects in the world. As if these were not sufficient to bear us up, and to bear us out; or to make an ample amends for the loss of any comfort. As if God, with all his perfections, and heaven, with all its glories, were nothing; no, nothing to that child, that husband, that wife, that estate. I have seen a grief so stubborn and savage, as to prove insensible to all the principles and prospects that could be mentioned.

In such cases we fall short of many excellent heathens. We are outdone by those with whom we are ashamed to be compared, considering all things. Some of them had noble sentiments under the loss of estates, relations, or friends. Zeno lost all in a shipwreck; he protested it was the best voyage he ever made in his life, because it proved the occasion of betaking himself to the study of virtue and philosophy. Seneca says, he enjoyed his relations as one that was to lose them; and lost them as one who had them still in possession. A Spartan woman had five sons in the army on the day of battle. When a soldier came running from the camp to the city to bring tidings, she, waiting at the gate to hear his report, asked, "What news?" Says the messenger, "*Thy five sons are slain.*" "You fool," says she, "I did not ask after them. How goes it in the field of battle?" "Why," says the messenger, "we have gained the victory; *Sparta* is safe." "Then let us be thankful," says she, "to the gods for our deliverance and continued freedom!" Seneca speaks to God in such

language as this: "I only want to know your will; as soon as I know what that is, I am always of the same mind. I do not say you have taken from me, that looks as if I were unwilling; but that you have accepted from me, which I am ready to offer."

SECTION XI.

DIRECTIONS.

LAY the foundation of your consolation right, namely, in true conversion, a state of grace, the pardon of sin, and the favour of God. Lay the foundation of it within you, and not on things without; above, and not on things below; on Christ, and not on yourselves; in the principles and prospects of religion, and not on the things of this world; in the rectification of your opinions, in the government of your appetites and passions, and in possessing your souls in patience: without this, you have something else to cry for than a lost friend. You have a lost soul to bewail, of infinitely more concern to you than any thing, or any person in the world.

If my comforts depend only on things without me, they lie at the mercy of so many accidents, that it must needs be very precarious. But if I can say, "I am at peace with God; *I have a conscience void of offence toward God and man;* I have a good hope through grace, as to another world, and my heart does not condemn me;" the accidents of life cannot utterly ruin the peace of such a soul. This is that peace of which Christ says, *My peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.*

The man who lays the foundation of his peace and quiet in estate, relations, health, pleasures of life, or life itself; when any of these is in danger, his peace is shaken or destroyed: whereas, the man is immoveable who can think and say thus:

"I am sick, but not afraid to die: it is he who is sick, and fears to die, whose peace is destroyed by sickness. I am in pain it is true; but I have patience to possess my soul: it is he who is in pain, and has no patience, whose comfort is destroyed. I am slighted, and disregarded; perhaps for want of merit; if I am conscious of my deserving better, let that be my consolation, without estimating my comfort and peace by the opinion of others. I am lessened in estate, and reduced to narrow circumstances; true, but I am not covetous; had I been covetous of much, all my comfort and peace would have gone with my substance. But I plainly see the comfort of life does not lie so such in the abundance of these things, as in the art of enjoying a little. I have lost indeed a dear friend, and a lovely creature; but my happiness was more wrapt up in that God to whom that beloved person is gone: God will bring them along with him. That which beautified their character, and made them so lovely, was what could not be lost, but is perfected by the translation. I love them still, and take a pleasure in loving them, which relieves the sorrow for their absence. The man who does not fear death so much as an ill life; who thinks impatience a worse disease than gout or stone; who thinks pride a greater reproach than being slighted; covetousness a viler thing than poverty; and that to offend God with immoderate grief is worse than any loss whatsoever; that man's comfort and peace is not precarious; does not lie at the mercy of other men's fancies and passions; and is above the reach of accidents."

He knows not the world nor himself, who depends upon life, such as ours; who is distracted at a cross accident as if he was privileged from the common lot, and some strange thing had happened to him. Did you never before imagine, that the person you are now lamenting for was a mortal, as well as yourself? That what was born must die? That what has befallen others, might happen to you? That what owes its value only to fancy, has only a fanciful worth? And what can be bought with money here on earth, is not more excellent,

There is indeed a knowledge of the world that polishes the gentleman to be learned in courts and camps, and in a general conversation: but the knowledge that secures a man's peace and quiet through all events, is to be found only in the Bible. That book will tell us, that "this world is not our resting-place, for it is polluted:" that it must not, nor cannot be our portion; that it is not an equal price for our souls, though we could *gain the whole* of it; that *the world lies in wickedness*, an enemy to Christ and his interest; that it is one of our enemies we must overcome by faith; that it is of a perishing nature, and in continual change and variation.

To consider this world as philosophers, it is a fine building; every thing is adjusted in number, weight, and measure. We admire 'the heavens, the work of 'thy fingers; the moon, and the stars, which thou hast 'ordained!' But why does the astronomer stop short at the visible heavens? Why not penetrate farther, to that *glory* which God hath set above those heavens? *Faith is the evidence of things not seen* by the telescope. There is the Christian's home and country. Here we are strangers and pilgrims, passing out of it. In short, he knows the world best, who comes up to that text, 'Love not 'the world, nor the things of the world;' and concludes with the great Mornæus, that, "If all the world was made for man, man was made for something more than all the world." Let us balance the thoughts of what we have lost, with the remembrance of what we were made for.

What do we see in ourselves, that we should expect always to be pleased? *We are not better than our fathers.* If I am dead to this world, why am I so distracted that another is dead out of it? If I am not dead to this world, I ought to be so, and to be more concerned for my own soul, than for any dead friend. Learn to think and speak of this world now, as you will do when you are going out of it. Acknowledge it to be a place where you must daily lose something, till you have lost all. And let your soul assuredly conceive, that having had its original from heaven, it is one of those things which must one day return thither. (Bishop Patrick.)

While your sorrows are afloat, turn them into a godly-channel. It will be more easy at such a time, to employ them in mourning for sin. This is fetching *meat out of the eater*, and comfort out of trouble. This is making sorrow, otherwise fruitless and hurtful, to be of use and service. So the skilful husbandman directs the stream to his mill, and makes it work, instead of running to waste, or doing mischief. Perhaps this is one intention of the providence. At least, it will be a wise and happy improvement of it: "Since I am now so ready to burst out into tears, I will weep part of them over a sinful life." This will make it a healing wound, and a comforting sorrow; and at the same time, give vent to nature, and exercise to grace.

This is often best done upon our knees in prayer: a time of affliction is a time of prayer. 'Is any afflicted? 'Let him pray. Call upon me in the day of trouble, 'and I will deliver thee. Be careful for nothing' over much: 'but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, 'with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known 'unto God,' Phil. iv. 6. For, 'he will regard the pray-'er of the destitute, and not despise their prayer;' Ps. cii. 17. Thus God invites you to come and drop some of your tears at his feet: it is likely he may turn your sorrows into joy. It will compose the spirit, calm the passions, spiritualize the affections, strengthen faith, hope, and love; for under the influence of the other world, we always less regard this.

O Holy Spirit! is it not thy name and office to be *The Comforter?* Does not my case need comfort? Art not thou as willing and ready to help, as I am desirous of it? Come, Holy Ghost, and do thine office of consolation to a poor soul that needs it. Lord, increase my faith; and in the same proportion my sorrows will abate, and my consolation will abound. Hope and faith are the only supports under things that have no cure in this world. It is in believing that we have joy unspeakable, and full of glory. It is in believing that our hearts are fortified against the troubles and pangs that others feel. So Christ has connected them together: 'Let not your 'hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in

'me.' Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. I believe in God, and the great truths of natural religion. I believe also in thee, and the peculiar discoveries of the Gospel. I believe thy Providence manages all things according to the purpose of thine own will and wisdom. I believe thy promises shall be fulfilled, which are a great support to my mind. I believe thy watchful care and never failing love to thine own. I believe the reality and excellency of the future world, and have good hope, through grace, of my title to it. And how little, how very little, do all these lower things appear, when that world is in full view! The just, who live by faith, and die in faith, may rejoice in faith, in the midst of their sorrows. The joys of faith are the best remedy against the grief of sense. 'I had fainted, unless I had believed 'to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.' It was faith, the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for, to which those heroes of faith and patience owe their glorious character, Hebrews xi. 'We are kept by the power of God, through faith 'unto salvation: wherein ye greatly rejoice; though 'now for a season ye are in heaviness; through mani-'fold temptations; that the trial of your faith being 'much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, 'though tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and 'honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ; 'whom having not seen, we love: in whom, though now 'we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy un-'speakable, and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 5. Grief says, "The dear creature is gone!" Faith says, "Gone before, not lost; and that the meeting again is certain; will be comfortable; and in a little time; and inseparable for ever."

It is of great use to consider the examples of patience under afflictions that are to be met with in sacred and common history. 'Take, my brethren, the prophets, 'who have spoken to you in the name of the Lord, for 'an example of suffering affliction, and of patience,' James v. 10. And the first he mentions is Job, ver. 11. 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job.' One part of his estate was plundered by the inroads of his enemies;

another part was burnt up with lightning from heaven: his children were cut off at once by a violent tempest, seven sons, and three daughters: his own health was turned into sickness and corruption; from the crown of the head to the soal of the foot, were boils and sores. He takes a bit of broken potsheard to scrape himself withal, his fingers being too sore for that poor office. He sat down among the ashes; nor could he there be quiet; he is insulted by one of the foolish women, and teized with uncharitable censures, and false reasoning of friends, who endeavoured to wrangle him out of all that remained of comfort to him; namely, the inward consciousness of his own integrity. How great were his trials! How glorious his patience!

When Aaron lost his two sons, it is said, *Aaron held his peace.* When Eli heard the prediction of the death and ruin of his family, he answered, 'It is the Lord, 'let him do what seemeth good unto him.' And David says, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth; because 'thou didst it.' Abraham's offering his son, with that resolution, was a great thing; and God estimated it according to his intention. The mother of the Maccabees, who sacrificed her seven sons, and stood by the execution, that she might help them through their martyrdom by her counsel and comfort, has something in it uncommonly heroick; she also following them herself in the same glorious path.

Among the primitive Christians there are many such instances of suffering and patience; a contempt of this world, and an eagerness after another, that may well make us ashamed for our feebleness under lesser trials, with much greater advantages.

But above all, let us keep in our eye the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ: 'Consider him that endured 'such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye 'be weary and faint in your minds,' Heb. xii. 3. 'Look-'ing unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith;' the fountain of all our supplies, and the pattern of our behaviour.

It is great wisdom not to have these principles to lay in when they are to be employed; nor these supports to

get when they should be used. It is no wonder people are at a loss in a time of affliction, when they are strangers to those things wherein the best consolation doth consist There are no such cordials as the Christian religion affords; but they are nothing, if, like cordials, they are only used when a fainting fit comes. They must be daily made our food, established principles, and settled habits; practised into a second nature: or else, we shall be like soldiers unexercised before the attack; or travellers unprovided at the moment of the journey. People, in other cases, do not pretend to perform what they have not learned to do; to play upon an instrument they have never practised; to perform an exercise they never made themselves masters of: but Christianity they think may be acted *ex tempore*, and upon a sudden, without learning it. But we see that will not do, where no habit of submission is acquired beforehand. Where the mind is not prepared by the frequent actings of resignation, men are to seek how to use, and how to apply the principles of peace and comfort, if they have them; and much more still at a loss, if those principles are to be got at the very time they are to be used. They are not then capable of the consolation arising from principles and prospects they are utter strangers to. They wonder what you mean. They call for the dear creature that is gone; they grieve, and grieve on; they teize themselves; they offend God; they have no comfort under present calamity; they draw more calamity upon themselves by the excess or continuance of their sorrow; and all for want of preparing a good foundation against such a time to come.

SECTION XII.

THE CLOSE.

"I WOULD not have you to be ignorant, brethren, 'concerning them who are asleep; that you sorrow not

'even as others who have no hope. For if we believe 'that Christ died, and rose again, even so them also 'who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him: the 'dead in Christ shall rise first,' 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Let them that have no hope, have no bounds to their sorrow; and be as heathenish in the manner of it as they are in its cause and rise; namely, the want of hope. *The righteous hath hope in his death;* therefore we will not despair in our sorrows. Other people, how many soever in number, or great in figure, are not to be followed in any excess. A Christian neither lives or dies, rejoices or sorrows, as others do; according to his own character, *sorrows not as do others.*

The caution against immoderate sorrow, is grounded upon the present condition of the godly dead; *They sleep in Jesus.* And upon the future meeting we shall have, *God will bring them along with him:* And the certainty of these things; as certain as that *Jesus died and rose again.* If we believe one, we must believe the other. *For if you believe that Jesus died and rose again,* as surely you do; you must also believe that *they who sleep in Jesus, will God bring along with him.* And then we shall all be together again.

How soft a name is given to the Christian's death; and how lovely a notion of their present state! *They sleep in Jesus.*

They sleep. Why do you mourn as if they were extinct; as if they were annihilated and utterly lost?

Mourner. But they are lost to me.

Answer. Not for ever; not for a very long time: 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, 'and will not tarry.' When they were alive, sleep and absence separated your relation for a great part of the time.

Mourner. But I knew then they would awake from sleep, and return from absence: but now—

Answer. And do not you now believe that they will awake from sleep, and return from absence? But when you say you knew that they would awake from sleep, and return from absence, you speak in terms too strong: You might *expect*, indeed, and *hope*, that they would awake

and return; but that they would certainly do so, is more than any one could insure, who *knows not what a day may bring forth.* But this we certainly know, that *they who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him,* as surely as we believe that *Jesus died and rose again from the dead.*

Mourner. But it will be a great while first.

Answer. What if it be? Is it not worth tarrying for? And it may not be so long, neither, as you imagine.

Mourner. But what must I do in the mean time?

Answer. Do but these two or three things, and all shall be well. See that your own soul is safe; secure your happy meeting, that your separation may not be eternal; give due allowance to the passion of nature, and refuse not the help of grace. Time will do something; reflection more; and religion will complete the work of resignation.

They that are asleep in Jesus, are as truly alive as you, and in a thousand times more excellent sense, and to more excellent purposes: For he who died for us, did it for this end, that 'whether we sleep, or whether 'we wake, we should live together with him,' 1 Thess. v. 10. For, 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the 'living,' Luke xx. 38. *Living*, at present, as to the soul; and shall live hereafter in the body again.

'We live together with him, whether we wake or 'sleep.' They who sleep in Jesus, live together with him, in his presence, and enjoyment. In this respect it is, that Christ says, 'He that believes in me, shall 'never die:'* Never die totally. But when the body sleeps in Jesus, the soul lives *together with him;* and proceeds in a life that death cannot discontinue, nor eternity exhaust.

Sleep is a rest from weariness; from the cares and labours of the day. Such is the death of the Christian.

'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they 'rest from their labours:' from the labours of their

* According to the letter of the translation; though it may be rendered, *He that believes in me, shall not die for ever.*

calling, as men; from the labours of their duty, as Christians; because all the duty that follows in the separate state, will be without labour and weariness; from the labour of opposing sin, and temptations to it; from all the troubles of life, and the sorrows attending it. It is not merely farewell husband, wife, and children; but farewell sorrow and sin; farewell suffering; farewell corruption, weakness, temptation: welcome *rest* from all these troubles.

Sleep is a refreshment, and a reparation of spirits; and to the better part death gives a refreshment, that amounts to a satisfaction. 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,' Psalm xvii. 15. Which some have understood of the soul's awakening to a nobler life, upon the body's falling asleep.

Sleep is but for a while, and then we wake again; and death is but for a while, and we awake in the morning of the resurrection. What David says of his lying down in his bed and rising, we may say of our lying down in the grave and rising. 'I laid me down and 'slept; for the Lord sustained me. So man lieth down 'and awaketh not, (*as to the body*) till the heavens be 'no more.' *If a man die*, says Job, *shall he live again?* Shall he indeed? If so, I acknowledge there is consolation in the thought, and wonder in the work, to support and stay my mind; and therefore *all the days of my appointed time*, that I have to lie in the grave, there *will I wait till my change*, by the resurrection, *come. For thou shalt call*, by the sound of the last trumpet and voice of the Lord, *and I will answer. Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine own hands*, to restore and improve it, and not suffer it always to lie there in rubbish. Sleep is but a short death, and death a longer sleep to the body. 'The hour is coming, when all that 'are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come 'forth: They who have done good, unto the resurrec-'tion of life,' John v. 28, 29. May they sleep sweetly, may they wake joyfully. They were Christ's friends as well as yours. Allow him to have his friends about him, as well as you have had them so long. It may be before Christ has had them so long with him, as some

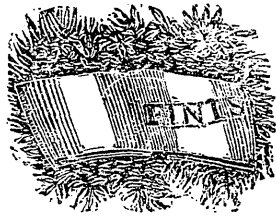
of you have had them here below, you will be with them again; and Christ, and you, and they, be all together.

'I would not have you ignorant, brethren.' Immoderate sorrow is very much owing to ignorance, or a knowledge that has no effect to govern the passions, which is the same thing with ignorance, except that it *entitles to the greater number of stripes*. Do not behave as if you were ignorant of the frail nature, and short duration of the comforts of this life! as if you were ignorant of the christian hope, life and immortality; as if you were ignorant of the present state of them that sleep in Jesus, how happy it is, and of the certain future meeting again with advantage to all those excellencies, for which you loved them here so well. Prayer will give a vent to a great deal of that sorrow that torments others; and hope will fetch in a great deal of comfort which *a stranger intermeddles not with*. They are therefore mentioned together by the apostle; 'Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing 'steadfast in prayer,' Rom. xii. 12. "He is a miserable man indeed, who is afflicted and cannot pray:"* 'And whose days are spent without hope,' Job vii. 6. Where there is no hope, there is no comfort; where there are no grounds of hope, there are no grounds of comfort. And when the prospects of hope are neglected, and we act as if we were ignorant of them, or knew not how to use them, the grievousness of our sorrow is very much owing to ourselves, and is its own punishment, though not the only one we deserve.

Moderate sorrow is allowable on account of our own loss, even of those who do sleep in Jesus. The apostle does not say, he would not have them sorrow at all, but not *as others*. He does not say, I would not have you sorrow at all, but not as *those who have no such hopes* as you have. It is the regulation of sorrow that he aims at, and not the total suppression of it. Grace doth not destroy nature, but refines it: It doth not ex-

* Mr Dod's *Saying*.

tinguish the affections and passions, but rectifies and moderates them. To be altogether unconcerned, is unnatural; to be so overmuch is unchristian. They are both hurtful extremes to any soil, either to have no water at all, or to have it overflow and drown the land round about.



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